

THE  
BRITISH POETS.

VOL. III.

EDINBURGH

Printed for A. KINCAID and W. CREECH,  
and J. BALFOUR.

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M, DCC, LXXIII.

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BRITISH POETS.



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Printed for A. Kincaid and W. Green,  
and J. Ballantyne.

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Printed



PARADISE REGAIN'D.

A  
P O E M,  
I N  
F O U R B O O K S.

To which is added,

SAMSON AGONISTES,  
AND  
COMUS, A MASK.

The AUTHOR  
JOHN MILTON.

VOL. III.

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M, DCC, LXXIII.

ARADISE RECALIND

P O E M

IN

F O U R D O O R S

AMSON AGOSTES



COMUS, A. S. K.

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

VOL. II

EDINBURGH

WILLIAM A. LEITCH, LONDON

MILTON

# PARADISE REGAIN'D.

## B O O K I.

**I** Who ere while the happy garden sung,  
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing  
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,  
By one man's firm obedience fully try'd  
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd  
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,  
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Sp'rit who ledst this glorious eremite  
Into the desert, his victorious field,  
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence  
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,  
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,  
And bear through height or depth of nature's bounds  
With prosp'rous wing full summ'd to tell of deeds  
Above heroic, though in secret done,  
And unrecorded left through many an age,  
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great proclaimer, with a voice  
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cry'd  
Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand  
To all baptiz'd: To his great baptism flock'd  
With awe the regions round, and with them came  
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd

'To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,  
Unmark'd, unknown; but him the Baptist soon  
Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore  
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd  
To him his heav'nly office, nor was long  
His witness unconfirm'd: On him baptiz'd  
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove  
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice  
From heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.  
That heard the adversary, who roving still  
About the world, at that assembly sam'd  
Would not be last, and with the voice divine  
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom  
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd  
With wonder, then with envy fraught, and rage,  
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air  
To council summons all his mighty peers,  
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,  
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst  
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

O ancient pow'rs of air and this wide world,  
For much more willingly I mention air,  
This our old conquest, than remember hell  
Our hated habitation; well ye know  
How many ages, as the years of men,  
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd  
In manner at our will th' affairs of earth,  
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve  
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since  
With dread attending when that fatal wound  
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve  
Upon my head: Long the decrees of Heav'n

Delay, for longest time to him is short ;  
 And now too soon for us the circling hours  
 This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we  
 Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd wound,  
 At least if so we can, and by the head  
 Broken be not intended all our power  
 To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,  
 In this fair empire won of earth and air :  
 For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed  
 Destin'd to this, is late of woman born :  
 His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,  
 But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying  
 All virtue, grace, and wisdom to atchieve  
 Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.  
 Before him a great prophet, to proclaim  
 His coming, is sent harbinger, who all  
 Invites, and in the consecrated stream  
 Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so  
 Purified to receive him pure, or rather  
 To do him honour as their king ; all come,  
 And he himself among them was baptis'd,  
 Not thence to be more pure, but to receive  
 The testimony of heav'n, that who he is  
 Thenceforth the nations may not doubt ; I saw  
 The prophet do him reverence, on him rising  
 Out of the water, heav'n above the clouds  
 Unfold her chrystal doors, thence on his head  
 A perfect dove descend, whate'er it meant,  
 And out of heav'n the sov'reign voice I heard,  
 'This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.  
 His mother then is mortal, but his sire,  
 He who obtains the monarchy of heav'n,



And what will he not do to advance his Son ?  
 His first-begot we know, and fore have felt,  
 When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep ;  
 Who this is we must learn, for man he seems  
 In all his lineaments, though in his face  
 The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.  
 Ye see our danger on the utmost edge  
 Of hazard, which admits no long debate,  
 But must with something sudden be oppos'd,  
 Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven snares,  
 Ere in the head of nations he appear  
 Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.  
 I, when no other durst, sole undertook  
 The dismal expedition to find out  
 And ruin Adam, and th' exploit perform'd  
 Successfully ; a calmer voyage now  
 Will waite me ; and the way found prosp'rous once  
 Induces best to hope of like success.  
 He ended, and his words impression left  
 Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,  
 Distracted and surpriz'd with deep dismay  
 At these sad tidings ; but no time was then  
 For long indulgence to their fears or grief :  
 Unanimous they all commit the care  
 And management of this main enterprize  
 To him their great dictator, whose attempt  
 At first against mankind so well had thriv'd  
 In Adam's overthrow, and led their march  
 From hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,  
 Regents and potentates, and kings, yea gods  
 Of many-a pleasant realm and province wide.  
 So to the coast of Jordan he directs



His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,  
 Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,  
 This man of men, attested Son of God,  
 Temptation and all guile on him to try;  
 So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd  
 To end his reign on earth so long enjoy'd :  
 But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd  
 The purpos'd counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt  
 Of the Most High, who in full frequency bright  
 Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,  
 Thou and all angels conversant on earth  
 With man or mens affairs, how I begin  
 To verify that solemn message late,  
 On which I sent thee to the virgin pure  
 In Galilee, that she should bear a son  
 Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God ;  
 Then toldst her, doubting how these things could be  
 To her a virgin, that on her should come  
 The Holy-Ghost, and the power of the Highest  
 O'er-shadow her : This man born and now up-grown,  
 To shew him worthy of his birth divine  
 And high prediction, henceforth I expose  
 To Satan ; let him tempt and now assay  
 His utmost subtlety, because he boasts  
 And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng  
 Of his apostasy ; he might have learnt  
 Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,  
 Whose constant perseverance overcame  
 Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.  
 He now shall know I can produce a man  
 Of female seed, far abler to resist

All his sollicitations, and at length  
 All his vast force, and drive him back to hell,  
 Winning by conquest what the first man lost  
 By fallacy surpriz'd. But first I mean  
 To exercise him in the wilderness,  
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments  
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth  
 To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,  
 By humiliation and strong sufferance :  
 His weakness shall o'ercome satanic strength,  
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh ;  
 That all the angels and ætherial powers,  
 They now, and men hereafter may discern,  
 From what consummate virtue I have chose  
 This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,  
 To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all heav'n  
 Admiring stood a space, then into hymns  
 Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd  
 Circling the throne and singing, while the hand  
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and triumph to the Son of God,  
 Now entering his great duel, not of arms,  
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.  
 The Father knows the Son ; therefore secure  
 Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,  
 Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,  
 Allure, or terrify, or undermine.  
 Be frustrate all ye stratagems of hell,  
 And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd :  
 Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days

Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,  
 Musing and much revolving in his breast,  
 How best the mighty work he might begin  
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first  
 Publish his god-like office now mature,  
 One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;  
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse  
 With solitude, till far from track of men,  
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,  
 He entered now the bordering desert wild,  
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,  
 His holy meditation thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once  
 Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider  
 What from within I feel myself, and hear,  
 What from without comes often to my ears,  
 Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.  
 When I was yet a child, no childish play  
 To me was pleasing, all my mind was set  
 Serious to learn and know, and thence to do  
 What might be public good; myself I thought  
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
 All righteous things: Therefore above my years,  
 The law of God I read and found it sweet,  
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew  
 To such perfection, that ere yet my age  
 Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast  
 I went into the temple, there to hear  
 The teachers of our law, and to propose  
 What might improve my knowledge or their own;  
 And was admir'd by all, yet this not all  
 To which my spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds

Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while  
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,  
 Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth  
 Brute violence and proud tyrannic pow'r,  
 Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd :  
 Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly, first  
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,  
 And make persuasion do the work of fear ;  
 At least to try, and teach the erring soul  
 Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware  
 Misled ; the stubborn only to destroy.  
 These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving  
 By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,  
 And said to me apart, High are thy thoughts,  
 O son, but nourish them and let them soar  
 To what height sacred virtue and true worth  
 Can raise them, though above example high ;  
 By matchless deeds express thy matchless fire.  
 For know, thou art no son of mortal man,  
 Though men esteem thee low of parentage,  
 Thy father is th' eternal King who rules  
 All heav'n and earth, angels and sons of men ;  
 A messenger from God fore-told thy birth  
 Conceived in me a virgin, he fore-told  
 Thou should'st be great and sit on David's throne,  
 And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.  
 At thy nativity a glorious quire  
 Of angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung  
 To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,  
 And told them the Messiah now was born,  
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came ;  
 Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,

For in the inn was left no better room :  
 A star, not seen before, in heav'n appearing  
 Guided the wise men thither from the east,  
 To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,  
 By whose bright course led on they found the place,  
 Affirming it thy star new grav'n in heav'n,  
 By which they knew the King of Israel born.  
 Just Simeon, and prophetic Anna, warn'd  
 By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake  
 Before the altar and the vested priest,  
 Like things of thee to all that present stood :  
 This having heard, straight I again revolv'd  
 The law and prophets, searching what was writ  
 Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes  
 Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake  
 I am ; this chiefly, that my way must lie  
 Through many a hard assay even to the death,  
 Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain,  
 Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins  
 Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.  
 Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,  
 The time prefix'd I waited, when behold !  
 The baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,  
 Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come  
 Before Messiah and his way prepare,  
 As all others to his baptism came,  
 Which I believ'd was from above ; but he  
 Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd  
 Me him (for it was shewn him so from heav'n)  
 Me him whose harbinger he was ; and first  
 Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,  
 As much his greater, and was hardly won :



But as I rose out of the laving stream,  
 Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence  
 The Spirit descended on me like a dove,  
 And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,  
 Audibly heard from heav'n, pronounc'd me his,  
 Me his beloved Son, in whom alone  
 He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time  
 Now full, that I no more should live obscure,  
 But openly begin, as best becomes  
 The authority which I deriv'd from heav'n.  
 And now by some strong motion I am led  
 Into this wilderness, to what intent  
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;  
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our morning star, then in his rise,  
 And looking round on every side beheld  
 A pathless desert, dusk, with horrid shades;  
 The way he came not having mark'd, return  
 Was difficult, by human steps untrod;  
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts  
 Accompanied of things past and to come  
 Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend  
 Such solitude before choicest society.  
 Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill  
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night  
 Under the covert of some ancient oak,  
 Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,  
 Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;  
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt  
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last  
 Among wild beasts; they at his sight grew mild,  
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk



The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,  
 The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.  
 But now an aged man in rural weeds,  
 Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,  
 Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve  
 Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,  
 To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,  
 He saw approach, who first with curious eye  
 Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance has brought thee to this place  
 So far from path or road of men, who pass  
 In troop or caravan, for single none  
 Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here  
 His carcass pin'd with hunger and with drought.  
 I ask thee rather, and thee more admire  
 For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late  
 Our new baptizing prophet at the ford  
 Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd the Son  
 Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes  
 Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth  
 'To town or village nigh (nighest is far)  
 Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,  
 What happens new; fame also finds us out.

To whom the son of God. Who brought me hither  
 Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain;  
 What other way I see not, for we here  
 Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd  
 More than the camel, and to drink go far,  
 Men to much misery and hardship born;  
 But if thou be the Son of God, command  
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;

So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve  
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

He ended, and the son of God reply'd.

Think'st thou such force in bread? is it not written  
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)  
Man lives not by bread only, but each word  
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed  
Our fathers here with manna? In the mount  
Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank,  
And forty days Elijah without food  
Wand'ring this barren waste; the same I now:  
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,  
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' arch-fiend now undisguis'd.  
'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate,  
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt  
Kept not my happy station, but was driv'n  
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,  
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd  
By rigour unconniving, but that oft  
Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy  
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,  
Or range in th' air, nor from the heav'n of heav'ns  
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.  
I came among the sons of God, when he  
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job  
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;  
And when to all his angels he propos'd  
To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud,  
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,  
I undertook that office; and the tongues  
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies

To his destruction, as I had in charge,  
 For what he bids I do : Though I have lost  
 Much lustre of my native brightness, lost  
 To be belov'd of God, I have not lost  
 To love, at least contemplate and admire  
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,  
 Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.  
 What can be then less in me than desire  
 To see thee, and approach thee whom I know  
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent  
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds ?  
 Men generally think me much a foe  
 To all mankind : Why should I ? they to me  
 Never did wrong or violence, by them  
 I lost not what I lost, rather by them  
 I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell  
 Copartner in these regions of the world,  
 If not disposer ; lend them oft my aid,  
 Oft my advice by presages and signs,  
 And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,  
 Whereby they may direct their future life.  
 Envy they say excites me, thus to gain  
 Companions of my misery and woe.  
 At first it may be ; but long since with woe  
 Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,  
 That fellowship in pain divides not smart,  
 Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load ;  
 Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd :  
 This wounds me most (what can it less) that man,  
 Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.  
 To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd :  
 Deserv'dly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies

From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;  
 Who boast'st release from hell, and leave to come  
 Into the heav'n of heav'ns: Thou com'st indeed,  
 As a poor miserable captive thrall  
 Comes to the place where he before had sat  
 Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,  
 Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,  
 A spectacle of ruin or of scorn  
 To all the host of heav'n; the happy place  
 Imports to thee no happiness, no joy,  
 Rather inflames thy torment, representing  
 Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,  
 So never more in hell than when in heav'n.  
 But thou art serviceable to heav'n's King.  
 Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear  
 Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?  
 What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem  
 Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him  
 With all afflictions? but his patience won.  
 The other service was thy chosen task,  
 To be a liar in four hundred mouths;  
 For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.  
 Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles  
 By thee are giv'n, and what confest more true  
 Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,  
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.  
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark,  
 Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,  
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,  
 And not well understood as good not known?  
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine  
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct

To fly or follow what concern'd him most,  
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?  
 For God hath justly giv'n the nations up  
 To thy delusions, justly, since they fell  
 Idolatrous : But when his purpose is  
 Among them to declare his providence  
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,  
 But from him or his angels president  
 In ev'ry province, who themselves disdaining  
 T' approach thy temple, give thee in command  
 What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say  
 To thy adorers ? thou with trembling fear,  
 Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st ;  
 Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.  
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd ;  
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse  
 The Gentiles ; henceforth oracles are ceas'd ;  
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice  
 Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or else-where,  
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.  
 God hath now sent his living oracle  
 Into the world to teach his final will,  
 And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell  
 In pious hearts, an inward oracle  
 To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour ; but the subtle fiend,  
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,  
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,  
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will  
 But misery hath wrested from me : Where  
 Easily canst thou find one miserable,



And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth,  
 If it may stand him more in stead to lye  
 Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?  
 But thou art plac'd above me, thou art lord;  
 From thee I can and must submit endure  
 Check or reproof, and glad t' escape so quiet.  
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,  
 Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to th' ear,  
 And tuneable as silvan pipe or song;  
 What wonder then if I delight to hear  
 Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire  
 Virtue, who follows not her lore: Permit me  
 To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)  
 And talk at least, tho' I despair t' attain.  
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,  
 Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest  
 To tread his sacred courts, and minister  
 About his altar, handling holy things,  
 Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice  
 To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet  
 Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.  
 Thy coming thither, though I know thy scope,  
 I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st  
 Permission from above: Thou canst not more.

He added not; and Satan bowing low  
 His gray dissimulation, disappear'd  
 Into thin air diffus'd: For now began  
 Night with her fullen wings to double-shade  
 The desert; fowls in their clay-nests were couch'd;  
 And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.



# PARADISE REGAIN'D.

## B O O K II.

**M**EAN while the new-baptis'd, who yet remain'd  
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen  
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd  
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,  
And on that high authority had believ'd,  
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd, I mean  
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,  
With others, though in holy writ not nam'd,  
Now missing him their joy so lately found,  
So lately found, and so abruptly gone,  
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,  
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt :  
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,  
And for a time caught up to God, as once  
Moses was in the mount, and missing long ;  
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels  
Rode up to heav'n, yet once again to come.  
Therefore as those young prophets then with care  
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these  
Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho  
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,  
Machærus, and each town or city wall'd  
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,

Or in Perea; but return'd in vain.  
 Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,  
 Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring play,  
 Plain fisher-men, no greater men them call,  
 Close in a cottage low together got,  
 Their unexpected loss and complaints out-breath'd  
 Alas, from what high hope to what relapse  
 Unlook'd-for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld  
 Messiah certainly now come, so long  
 Expected of our fathers; we have heard  
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;  
 Now, now, for sure deliverance is at hand,  
 The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:  
 Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd  
 Into perplexity and new amaze:  
 For whither is he gone, what accident  
 Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire  
 After appearance, and again prolong  
 Our expectation? God of Israel,  
 Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;  
 Behold the kings of th' earth how they oppress  
 Thy chosen, to what heighth their pow'r unjust  
 They have exalted, and behind them cast  
 All fear of thee; arise and vindicate  
 Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke.  
 But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,  
 Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,  
 By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown  
 In public, and with him we have convers'd;  
 Let us be glad of this, and all our fears  
 Lay on his providence; he will not fail,  
 Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recal.

Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence :  
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume  
To find whom at the first they found unsought :  
But to his mother Mary, when she saw  
Others return'd from baptism, not her son,  
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none ;  
Within her breast, though calm, her breast, though pure,  
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd  
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honour high  
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,  
Hail highly favour'd, among women blest !  
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,  
And fears as eminent, above the lot  
Of other women, by the birth I bore ;  
In such a season born when scarce a shed  
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me  
From the bleak air ; a stable was our warmth,  
A manger his, yet soon enforc'd to fly  
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king  
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd  
With infant-blood the streets of Bethlehem ;  
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth  
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life  
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,  
Little suspicious to any king ; but now  
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,  
By John the baptist, and in public shown,  
Son own'd from heav'n by his Father's voice :  
I look'd for some great change ; to honour? no,  
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,

That to the fall and rising he should be  
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign  
 Spoken against, that through my very soul  
 A sword shall pierce; this is my favour'd lot,  
 My exaltation to afflictions high;  
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;  
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.  
 But where delays he now? some great intent  
 Conceals him: When twelve years he scarce had seen,  
 I lost him, but so found, as well I saw  
 He could not lose himself, but went about  
 His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,  
 Since understand; much more his absence now  
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.  
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd;  
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things  
 And sayings laid up, portending strange events.

Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind  
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd  
 Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts  
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:  
 The while her son tracing the desert wild,  
 Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,  
 Into himself descended, and at once  
 All his great work to come before him set;  
 How to begin, how to accomplish best  
 His end of being on earth, and mission high.  
 For Satan with sly preface to return  
 Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone  
 Up to the middle region of thick air,  
 Where all his potentates in council sat;  
 There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,

Sollicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, heav'n's ancient sons, aethereal thrones,  
 Demonian spirits now, from th' element  
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd  
 Pow'rs of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,  
 So may we hold our place and these mild seats  
 Without new trouble; such an enemy  
 Is risen to invade us, who no less  
 Threatens than our expulsion down to hell;  
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote  
 Consenting in full frequency was impower'd,  
 Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find  
 Far other labour to be undergone  
 Than when I dealt with Adam first of men,  
 Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,  
 However to this man inferior far,  
 If he be man by mother's side at least,  
 With more than human gifts from heav'n adorn'd,  
 Perfections absolute, graces divine,  
 And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.  
 Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence  
 Of my success with Eve in Paradise  
 Deceive you to persuasion over-sure  
 Of like succeeding here; I summon all  
 Rather to be in readiness, with hand  
 Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst  
 Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old serpent doubting, and from all  
 With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid  
 At his command; when from amidst them rose  
 Belial, the dissoluteest spirit that fell,  
 The sensuallest, and after Asmodai



The fleshliest Incubus; and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,  
 Among daughters of men the fairest found;  
 Many are in each region passing fair  
 As the noon sky; more like to goddesses  
 Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,  
 Expert in am'rous arts, enchanting tongues  
 Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild  
 And sweet allay'd, yet terrible t' approach,  
 Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw  
 Hearts after them, tangled in amorous nets.  
 Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame  
 Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,  
 Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,  
 Draw out with credulous desire, and lead  
 At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,  
 As the magnetic hardest iron draws.  
 Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart  
 Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,  
 And made him bow to the gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd:  
 Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st  
 All o'ers by thy self; because of old  
 Thou thy self doat'd'st on womankind, admiring  
 Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace.  
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.  
 Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,  
 False-titled sons of God, roaming the earth,  
 Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,  
 And coupled with them, and begot a race.  
 Have we not seen, or by relation heard,  
 In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'd'st,



In wood or grove by mossy fountain side,  
 In valley or green meadow, to way-lay  
 Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,  
 Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,  
 Or Amynone, Syrinx, many more  
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,  
 Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,  
 Satyr, or fawn, or silvan? but these haunts  
 Delight not all; among the sons of men,  
 How many have with a smile made small account  
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd  
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent?  
 Remember that Pellean conqueror,  
 A youth, how all the beauties of the east  
 He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;  
 How he firnam'd of Africa dismiss'd  
 In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid:  
 For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full  
 Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond  
 Higher design than to enjoy his state;  
 Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd:  
 But he whom we attempt is wiser far  
 Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,  
 Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment  
 Of greatest things; what woman will you find,  
 Though of this age the wonder and the fame,  
 On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye  
 Of fond desire? or should she confident,  
 As sitting queen ador'd on beauty's throne,  
 Descend with all her winning charms begirt  
 T' enamour, as the zone of Venus once  
 Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;

How would one look from his majestic brow,  
 Seated as on the top of virtue's hill,  
 Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout  
 All her array, her female pride deject,  
 Or turn to reverent awe? for beauty stands  
 In the admiration only of weak minds  
 Led captive; cease t' admire, and all her plumes  
 Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,  
 At every sudden slighting quite abash't :  
 Therefore with manlier objects we must try  
 His constancy, with such as have more shew  
 Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,  
 Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;  
 Or that which only seems to satisfy  
 Lawful desires of nature, not beyond.  
 And now I know he hungers where no food  
 Is to be found, in the wide wilderness;  
 The rest commit to me, I shall let pass  
 No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.  
 He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;  
 Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band  
 Of spirits likest to himself in guile  
 To be at hand, and at his back appear,  
 If cause were to unfold some active scene  
 Of various persons each to know his part :  
 Then to the desert takes with these his flight;  
 Where still from shade to shade the Son of God  
 After forty days fasting had remain'd,  
 Now hungering first, and to himself thus said :  
 Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd  
 Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food  
 Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that fast

To virtue I impute not, or count part  
 Of what I suffer here ; if nature need not,  
 Or God support nature without repast  
 Though needing, what praise is it to endure ?  
 But now I feel I hunger, which declares  
 Nature hath need of what she asks ; yet God  
 Can satisfy that need some other way,  
 Tho' hunger still remain ; so it remain  
 Without this body's wasting, I content me,  
 And from the sting of famine fear no harm,  
 Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed  
 Me hungring more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son  
 Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down  
 Under the hospitable covert nigh  
 Of trees thick interwoven ; there he slept  
 And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,  
 Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet ;  
 Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,  
 And saw the ravens with their horny beaks  
 Food to Elijah bringing even and morn,  
 Tho' rav'nous, taught t' abstain from what they brought.  
 He saw the prophet also how he fled  
 Into the desert, and how there he slept  
 Under a juniper ; then how awak'd,  
 He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,  
 And by the angel was bid rise and eat,  
 And eat the second time after repose,  
 The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days ;  
 Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,  
 Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.  
 Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark

Left his ground-nest, high-tow'ring to descry  
 The morn's approach, and greet her with his song :  
 As lightly from his grassy couch up rose  
 Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream ;  
 Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.  
 Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,  
 From whose high top to ken the prospect round,  
 If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd ;  
 But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,  
 Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,  
 With chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud ;  
 Thither he bent his way, determin'd there  
 To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade  
 High roost, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,  
 That open'd in the midst a woody scene ;  
 Nature's own work it seem'd (nature taught art)  
 And to a superstitious eye the haunt  
 Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs ; he view'd it round,  
 When suddenly a man before him stood,  
 (Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,  
 As one in city, or court, or palace-bred)  
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,  
 But much more wonder that the Son of God  
 In this wild solitude so long should bide,  
 Of all things destitute, and, well I know,  
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,  
 As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;  
 The fugitive bond-woman with her son,  
 Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief  
 By a providing angel ; all the race  
 Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God

Rain'd from heav'n manna ; and that prophet bold  
 Native of Thebez wand'ring here was fed  
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat ;  
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard,  
 Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus : What conclud'st thou hence ?  
 They all had need, I as thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then ? Satan reply'd.  
 Tell me, if food were now before thee set,  
 Would'st thou not eat ? Thereafter as I like  
 The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that  
 Cause thy refusal, said the subtle fiend ?  
 Hast thou not right to all created things ?  
 Owe not all creatures by just right to thee  
 Duty and service, not to stay till bid,  
 But tender all their pow'r ? nor mention I  
 Meats by the law unclean, nor offer'd first  
 To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;  
 Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who  
 Would scruple that, with want oppress'd ? Behold  
 Nature asham'd, or, better to express,  
 Troubl'd that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd  
 From all the elements her choicest store  
 To treat thee as befits, and as her lord,  
 With honour, only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream ; for as his words had end,  
 Our Saviour lifting up his eyes, beheld  
 In ample space under the broadest shade  
 A table richly spread, in regal mode,  
 With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort  
 And flavour, beasts of chase, or fowl of game,  
 In pastry-built, or from the spit, or boil'd,



Gris-amber-stream'd; all fish from sea or shore,  
 Freshet, or purling brook, of shell or fin,  
 And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd  
 Pontus and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.  
 Alas, how simple, to these cates compar'd,  
 Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!  
 And at a stately side-board by the wine  
 That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood  
 Tall stripling youths, rich clad, of fairer hue  
 Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more  
 Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood  
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades  
 With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,  
 And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd  
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since  
 Of Fairey damsels met in forest wide  
 By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,  
 Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.  
 And all the while harmonious airs were heard  
 Of chiming strings, or charming pipes; and winds  
 Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd  
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.  
 Such was the splendor; and the tempter now  
 His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?  
 These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict  
 Defends the touching of these viands pure;  
 Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,  
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,  
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.  
 [ All these are sp'rits of air, and woods, and springs,  
 Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay

Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord :  
What doubt'st thou Son of God ? sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd :  
Said'st thou not, that to all things I had right ?  
And who withholds my pow'r that right to use ?  
Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,  
When and where likes me best, I can command ?  
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,  
Command a table in this wilderness,  
And call swift flights of angels ministrant  
Array'd in glory on my cup t' attend :  
Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence  
In vain, where no acceptance it can find ?  
And with my hunger what hast thou to do ?  
'Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,  
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent :  
That I have also pow'r to give, thou seest ;  
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary  
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleas'd,  
And rather opportunely in this place  
Chose to impart to thy apparent need ;  
Why shouldst thou not accept it ? but I see  
What I can do or offer is suspect ;  
Of these things others quickly will dispose, [that  
Whose pains have earn'd the far-fetch'd spoil. With  
Both table and provision vanish'd quite  
With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard ;  
Only the importune tempter still remain'd,  
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,  
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd ;

Thy temperance invincible besides,  
 For no allurements yields to appetite,  
 And all thy heart is set on high designs,  
 High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?  
 Great acts require great means of enterprise;  
 Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,  
 A carpenter thy father known, thyself  
 Bred up in poverty and straits at home,  
 Lost in a desert here, and hunger-bit:  
 Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire  
 To greatness? whence authority deriv'd?  
 What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,  
 Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,  
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?  
 Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.  
 What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,  
 And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,  
 Thy throne, but gold that got him puissant friends?  
 Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,  
 Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,  
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:  
 Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;  
 They whom I favour, thrive in wealth again,  
 While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd:  
 Yet wealth without these three is impotent  
 To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.  
 Witness those antient empires of the earth,  
 In height of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd:  
 But men indued with these, have oft attain'd  
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds;  
 Gideon and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,

Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat  
 So many ages, and shall yet regain  
 That seat, and reign in Israel without end.  
 Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world  
 To me is not unknown what hath been done  
 Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember  
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus ?  
 For I esteem those names of men so poor,  
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn  
 Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings.  
 And what in me seems wanting, but that I  
 May also in this poverty as soon  
 Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more ?  
 Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,  
 The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt  
 To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,  
 Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.  
 What if with like aversion I reject  
 Riches and realms ? yet not for that a crown,  
 Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,  
 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights  
 To him who wears the regal diadem,  
 When on his shoulders each man's burden lies :  
 For therein stands the office of a king,  
 His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,  
 That for the public all this weight he bears.  
 Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules  
 Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king ;  
 Which ev'ry wise and virtuous man attains :  
 And who attains not, ill aspires to rule  
 Cities of men or headstrong multitudes,  
 Subjects himself to anarchy within,

Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.  
 But to guide nations in the way of truth  
 By saving doctrine, and from error lead  
 To know, and knowing worship God aright,  
 Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,  
 Governs the inner man, the nobler part;  
 That other o'er the body only reigns,  
 And oft by force, which to a gen'rous mind  
 So reigning can be no sincere delight.  
 Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought  
 Greater and nobler done, and to lay down  
 Far more magnanimous, than to assume.  
 Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,  
 And for thy reason why they should be sought.  
 To gain a sceptre, ofttest better miss'd.

*The end of the second book.*



## PARADISE REGAIN'D.

## BOOK III.

SO spake the Son of God, and Satan stood  
 A while as mute, confounded what to say,  
 What to reply, confuted and convinc'd  
 Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;  
 At length collecting all his serpent wiles,  
 With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,  
 What best to say canst say, to do canst do;  
 Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words  
 To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart  
 Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.  
 Should kings and nations, from thy mouth consult,  
 Thy counsel would be as the oracle  
 Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems  
 On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old  
 Infallible: Or wert thou fought to deeds  
 That might require th' array of war, thy skill  
 Of conduct would be such, that all the world  
 Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist  
 In battle, though against thy few in arms.  
 These god-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,  
 Affecting private life, or more obscure  
 In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive

All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself  
 The fame and glory, glory the reward  
 That sole excites to high attempts, the flame  
 Of most erected spirits, most temper'd pure  
 Aethereal, who all pleasures else despise,  
 All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,  
 And dignities and pow'rs all but the highest ?  
 Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe ; the son  
 Of Macedonian Philip had ere these  
 Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held  
 At his dispose ; young Scipio had brought down  
 The Carthaginian pride, young Pompey quell'd  
 The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.  
 Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,  
 Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.  
 Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,  
 The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd  
 With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long  
 Inglorious : But thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.  
 Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth  
 For empire's sake, nor empire to affect  
 For glory's sake, by all thy argument.  
 For what is glory but the blaze of fame,  
 The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd ?  
 And what the people but a herd confus'd,  
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol  
 Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise ?  
 They praise, and they admire they know not what,  
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other ;  
 And what delight to be by such extoll'd,  
 To live upon their tongues and be their talk,

Of whom to be despis'd were no small praise ?  
 His lot who dares be singularly good.  
 Th' intelligent among them and the wise  
 Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.  
 This is true glory and renown, when God  
 Looking on th' earth, with approbation marks  
 The just man, and divulges him through heav'n  
 To all his angels, who with true applause  
 Recount his praises : Thus he did to Job,  
 When to extend his fame through heav'n and earth,  
 As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,  
 He ask'd thee, Hast thou seen my servant Job ?  
 Famous he was in heav'n, on earth less known ;  
 Where glory is false glory, attributed  
 'To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.  
 They err who count it glorious to subdue  
 By conquest far and wide, to over-run  
 Large countries, and in field great battles win,  
 Great cities by assault : What do these worthies,  
 But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave  
 Peaceable nations, neighbouring, or remote,  
 Made captive, yet deserving freedom more  
 Than those their conquerors, who leave behind  
 Nothing but ruin wherefoe'er they rove,  
 And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,  
 Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,  
 Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,  
 Worshipp'd with temple, priest and sacrifice ;  
 One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other ;  
 Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men,  
 Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,  
 Violent or shameful death their due reward.

But if there be in glory aught of good,  
It may by means far different be attain'd  
Without ambition, war, or violence ;  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance : I mention still  
Him whom thy wrongs, with faintly patience borne,  
Made famous in a land and times obscure ;  
Who names not now with honour patient Job ?  
Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable ?)  
By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,  
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now  
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.  
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,  
Aught suffer'd ; if young African for fame  
His wasted country freed from Punic rage,  
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,  
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.  
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,  
Oft not deserv'd ? I seek not mine, but his  
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the tempter murm'ring thus reply'd.  
Think not so slight of glory ; therein least  
Resembling thy great Father : He seeks glory,  
And for his glory all things made, all things  
Orders and governs ; nor content in heav'n  
By all his angels glorify'd, requires  
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,  
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption ;  
Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift,  
Glory he requires, and glory he receives  
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,  
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd ;

From us his foes pronounc'd glory he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.  
 And reason; since his word all things produc'd,  
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,  
 But to shew forth his goodness, and impart  
 His good communicable t' ev'ry soul  
 Freely; of whom what could he less expect  
 Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,  
 The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence  
 From them who could return him nothing else,  
 And not returning that would likeliest render  
 Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?  
 Hard recompence, unsuitable return  
 For so much good, so much beneficence.  
 But why should man seek glory? who of his own  
 Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs  
 But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?  
 Who for so many benefits receiv'd,  
 Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,  
 And so of all true good himself despoil'd;  
 Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take  
 That which to God alone of right belongs;  
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,  
 That who advance his glory, not their own,  
 Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God: And here again  
 Satan had not to answer, but stood struck  
 With guilt of his own sin; for he himself  
 Insatiable of glory had lost all,  
 Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,  
 Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:



But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd  
 'To sit upon thy father David's throne;  
 By mother's side thy father; though thy right  
 Be now in powerful hands, that will not part  
 Easily from possession won with arms:  
 Judaea now and all the promis'd land,  
 Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,  
 Obeys Tiberius: Nor is always rul'd  
 With temperate sway; oft have they violated  
 The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,  
 Abominations rather, as did once  
 Antiochus: And think'st thou to regain  
 Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?  
 So did not Maccabaeus: He indeed  
 Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms;  
 And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,  
 'That by strong hand his family obtain'd,  
 Tho' priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,  
 With Modin and her suburbs once content.  
 If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal  
 And duty; zeal and duty are not flow;  
 But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.  
 They themselves rather are occasion best,  
 Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free  
 Thy country from her heathen servitude;  
 So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify  
 The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign;  
 The happier reign the sooner it begins;  
 Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?  
 To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.  
 All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,  
 And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:

If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,  
 That it shall never end, so when begin  
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,  
 He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.  
 What if he hath decreed that I shall first  
 Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,  
 By tribulations, injuries, insults,  
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,  
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,  
 Without distrust or doubt, that he may know  
 What I can suffer, how obey? who best  
 Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first  
 Well hath obey'd; just trial ere I merit  
 My exaltation without change or end.  
 But what concerns it thee when I begin  
 My everlasting kingdom, why art thou  
 Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition?  
 Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,  
 And my promotion will be thy destruction?  
 To whom the tempter inly rack'd reply'd.  
 Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost  
 Of my reception into grace; what worse?  
 For where no hope is left, is left no fear:  
 If there be worse, the expectation more  
 Of worse torments me than the feeling can.  
 I would be at the worst; worst is my port,  
 My harbour and my ultimate repose,  
 The end I would attain, my final good.  
 My error was my error, and my crime  
 My crime: Whatever for itself condemn'd,  
 And will alike be punish'd, whether thou  
 Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow

Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,  
 From that placid aspect and meek regard,  
 Rather than aggravate my evil state,  
 Would stand between me and thy Father's ire  
 (Whose ire I dread more than the fire of hell)  
 A shelter, and a kind of shading cool  
 Interposition, as a summer's cloud.  
 If I then to the worst that can be haste,  
 Why move thy feet so slow to what is best  
 Happiest both to thyself and all the world,  
 That thou who worthiest art should'st be their king?  
 Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd  
 Of th' enterprise so hazardous and high;  
 No wonder, for though in thee be united  
 What of perfection can in man be found,  
 Or human nature can receive, consider  
 Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent  
 At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,  
 And once a-year Jerusalem, few days  
 Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?  
 The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,  
 Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,  
 Best school of best experience, quickest insight  
 In all things that to greatest actions lead.  
 The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever  
 Tim'rous and loth, with novice modesty,  
 (As he who seeking asses found a kingdom)  
 Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous:  
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit  
 Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes  
 The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and state,  
 Sufficient introduction to inform

Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,  
 And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know  
 How best their opposition to withstand.

With that (such pow'r was giv'n him then) he took  
 The Son of God up to a mountain high.

It was a mountain, at whose verdant feet  
 A spacious plain, outstretch'd in circuit wide,  
 Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,  
 Th' one winding, th' other strait, and left between  
 Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd,  
 Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea :  
 Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine ;  
 With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;  
 Huge cities and high tow'r'd, that well might seem  
 The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large  
 The prospect was, that here and there was room  
 For barren desert fountainless and dry.  
 To this high mountain top the tempter brought  
 Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,  
 Forest and field and flood, temples and tow'rs,  
 Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st  
 Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds,  
 Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on  
 As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,  
 And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,  
 And inaccessible th' Arabian drouth :  
 Here Nineveh, of length within her wall  
 Several days journey, built by Ninus old,  
 Of that first golden monarchy the seat,  
 And seat of Salmanassar, whose success  
 Israel in long captivity still mourns;

'There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,  
 As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice  
 Judah and all thy father David's house  
 Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,  
 Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis  
 His city there thou seest, and Bastra there;  
 Ecbatana her structure vast there shews,  
 And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;  
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,  
 The drink of none but kings; of later fame  
 Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,  
 The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there  
 Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,  
 Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.  
 All these the Parthian, now some ages past,  
 By great Arsaces led, who founded first  
 That empire, under his dominion holds,  
 From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.  
 And just in time thou com'st to have a view  
 Of his great pow'r; for now the Parthian king  
 In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host  
 Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild  
 Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid  
 He marches now in haste; see, though from far,  
 His thousands, in what martial equipage  
 They issue forth! steel bows and shafts their arms,  
 Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;  
 All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;  
 See how in warlike muster they appear,  
 In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and wings.  
 He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless  
 The city gates out-pour'd, light-armed troops



In coats of mail and military pride ;  
 In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,  
 Prancing their riders bore, the flow'r and choice  
 Of many provinces from bound to bound ;  
 From Arachosia, from Candaor east,  
 And Margiana to the Hircanian cliffs  
 Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,  
 From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains  
 Of Adiabene, Media, and the south  
 Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.  
 He saw them in their forms of battel rang'd.  
 How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot  
 Sharp fleet of arrowy show'rs against the face  
 Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;  
 The field, all iron, cast a gleaming brown :  
 Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn  
 Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight ;  
 Chariots or elephants endor'd with towers  
 Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers  
 A multitude with spades and axes arm'd  
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,  
 Or where plain was, raise hill, or overlay  
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke ;  
 Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,  
 And waggons fraught with utensils of war.  
 Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,  
 When Agrican with all his northern powers  
 Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,  
 The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win  
 The fairest of her sex Angelica  
 His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,  
 Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemaine.

Such and so numerous was their chivalry ;  
 At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd,  
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage  
 Thy virtue, and not ev'ry way secure  
 On no slight grounds thy safety ; hear, and mark  
 To what end I have brought thee hither, and shewn  
 All this fair sight : Thy kingdom though foretold  
 By prophet or by angel, unless thou  
 Endeavour, as thy father David did,  
 Thou never shalt obtain ; prediction still  
 In all things, and all men, supposes means ;  
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.  
 But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne  
 By free consent of all, none opposite,  
 Samaritan or Jew ; how could'st thou hope  
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,  
 Between two such inclosing enemies,  
 Roman and Parthian ? therefore one of these  
 Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first,  
 By my advice, as nearer, and of late  
 Found able by invasion to annoy  
 Thy country, and captive lead away her kings  
 Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,  
 Maugre the Roman : It shall be my task  
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose ;  
 Chuse which thou wilt by conquest or by league,  
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,  
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee  
 In David's royal seat, his true successor,  
 Deliv'rance of thy brethren, those ten tribes

Whose offspring in his territory yet serve  
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd ;  
 Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost  
 Thus long from Israel, serving as of old  
 Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,  
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.

These if from servitude thou shalt restore  
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,  
 Thou on the throne of David in full glory,  
 From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond  
 Shall reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.  
 Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,  
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war  
 Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,  
 Before mine eyes thou hast set ; and in my ear  
 Vented much policy, and projects deep  
 Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,  
 Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.  
 Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else  
 Will unpredict and fail me of the throne :  
 My time I told thee (and that time for thee  
 Were better farthest off) is not yet come ;  
 \* When that comes, think not thou to find me slack  
 On my part aught endeav'ring, or to need  
 Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome  
 Luggage of war there shewn me, argument  
 Of human weakness rather than of strength.  
 My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes  
 I must deliver, if I mean to reign  
 David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway

To just extent over all Israel's sons.  
 But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then  
 For Israel, or for David, or his throne,  
 When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride  
 Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives  
 Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites  
 By three days pestilence? such was thy zeal  
 To Israel then, the same that now to me.  
 As for those captive tribes, themselves were they  
 Who wrought their own captivity, fell off  
 From God to worship calves, the dieties  
 Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,  
 And all th' idolatries of heathen round,  
 Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes;  
 Nor in the land of their captivity  
 Humbled themselves, or penitent besought  
 The God of their forefathers: but so dy'd  
 Impenitent, and left a race behind  
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce  
 From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,  
 And God with idols in their worship join'd.  
 Should I of these the liberty regard,  
 Who freed, as to their ancient patrimony,  
 Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd,  
 Headlong would follow; and to their gods perhaps  
 Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve  
 Their enemies, who serve idols with God.  
 Yet he at length, time to himself best known,  
 Remembring Abraham, by some wond'rous call  
 May bring them back repentant and sincere,  
 And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood,

While to their native land with joy they haste,  
 As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,  
 When to the promis'd land their fathers pass'd;  
 To his due time and providence I leave them.

So spake Israel's true King, and to the fiend  
 Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.  
 So fares it when with truth fallhood contends.

*The end of the third book.*



## PARADISE REGAIN'D.

## B O O K IV.

**P**ERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success  
 The tempter stood, nor had what to reply,  
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope  
 So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric  
 That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve,  
 So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,  
 This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd  
 And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd  
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own:  
 But as a man who had been matchless held  
 In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,  
 To save his credit, and for very spight,  
 Still will be tempting him who foils him still,  
 And never cease, though to his shame the more;  
 Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,  
 About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,  
 Beat of, returns as oft with humming sound;  
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,  
 Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,  
 Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;  
 So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse  
 Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,  
 Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success,

And his vain importunity pursues.  
 He brought our Saviour to the western side  
 Of that high mountain, whence he might behold  
 Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,  
 Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north  
 To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,  
 That screen'd the fruits of th' earth and seats of men  
 From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst  
 Divided by a river, of whose banks  
 On each side an imperial city stood,  
 With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate  
 On sev'n small hills, with palaces adorn'd,  
 Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,  
 Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,  
 Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,  
 Above the heighth of mountains interpos'd :  
 By what strange parallax or optic skill  
 Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass  
 Of telescope, were curious to inquire :  
 And now the tempter thus his silence broke.

The city which thou seest no other deem  
 Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth  
 So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd  
 Of nations ; there the capitol thou seest  
 Above the rest lifting his stately head  
 On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel  
 Impregnable ; and there mount Palatine,  
 Th' imperial palace, compass huge, and high  
 The structure, skill of noblest architects,  
 With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,  
 Turrets and terraces, and glit'ring spires.  
 Many a fair edifice besides, more like

Houses of God (so well I have dispos'd  
 My airy microscope) thou may'st behold  
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs  
 Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers  
 In cedar, marble, ivory or gold.  
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see  
 What conflux issuing forth, or entring in,  
 Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces  
 Hast'ing, or on return, in robes of state;  
 Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their pow'r,  
 Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings:  
 Or embassies from regions far remote  
 In various habits on the Appian road,  
 Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,  
 Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,  
 Meroe Nilotic isle, and more to west,  
 The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;  
 From th' Asian kings and Parthian among these,  
 From India and the golden Chersonese,  
 And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,  
 Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreath'd;  
 From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,  
 Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north  
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.  
 All nations now to Rome obedience pay,  
 To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain  
 In ample territory, wealth and pow'r,  
 Civility of manners, arts and arms,  
 And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer  
 Before the Parthian; these two thrones except,  
 The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the sight,  
 Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd;

These having shown thee, I have shown thee all  
 The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.  
 This emp'ror hath no son, and now is old,  
 Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd  
 To Capreae an Island small but strong  
 On the Campanian shore, with purpose there  
 His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,  
 Committing to a wicked favourite  
 All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,  
 Hated of all, and hating; with what ease  
 Indu'd with regal virtues as thou art,  
 Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,  
 Might'st thou expell this monster from his throne  
 Now made a stye, and in his place ascending  
 A victor people free from servile yoke?  
 And with my help thou may'st; to me the pow'r  
 Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.  
 Aim therefore at no less than all the world,  
 Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd  
 Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,  
 On Davids throne, be prophesied what will.  
 To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.  
 Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show  
 Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,  
 More than of arms before, allure mine eye,  
 Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell  
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts  
 On citron tables or Atlantic stone,  
 (For I have, also heard, perhaps have read)  
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,  
 Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,  
 Crystal and myrrhine cups imboss'd with gems.

And studs of pearl, to me shouldst tell who thirst  
 And hunger still : Then embassies thou show'st  
 From nations far and nigh ; what honour that,  
 But tedious waste of time to sit and hear  
 So many hollow compliments and lies,  
 Outlandish flatteries ? then proceed'st to talk  
 Of th' emperor, how easily subdu'd,  
 How gloriously ; I shall, thou say'st, expell  
 A brutish monster : What if I withal  
 Expel a Devil who first made him such ?  
 Let his tormenter conscience find him out ;  
 For him I was not sent, nor yet to free  
 That people victor once, now vile and base,  
 Deservedly made vassal, who once just,  
 Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,  
 But govern ill the nations under yoke,  
 Peeling their provinces, exhausted all  
 By lust and rapine ; first ambitious grown  
 Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;  
 Then cruel, by their sports to blood innur'd  
 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,  
 Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,  
 And from the daily scene effeminate.  
 What wise and valiant man would seek to free  
 These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,  
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?  
 Know therefore when my season comes to sit  
 On David's throne, it shall be like a tree,  
 Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,  
 Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash  
 All monarchies besides throughout the world,  
 And of my kingdom there shall be no end :



Means there shall be to this, but what the means,  
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the tempter impudent reply'd.  
I see all offers made by me how slight  
Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st :  
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,  
Or nothing more than still to contradict :  
On th' other side know also thou, that I  
On what I offer set as high esteem,  
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought ;  
All these which in a moment thou behold'st,  
The kingdoms of the world to thee I give ;  
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,  
No trifle ; yet with this reserve, not else,  
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,  
And worship me as thy superior lord,  
Easily done, and hold them all of me ;  
For what can less so great a gift deserve ?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain :  
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,  
Now both abhorre, since thou hast dar'd to utter  
Th' abominable terms, impious condition ;  
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,  
Thou hast permission on me. It is written  
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship  
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve ;  
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound  
To worship thee accurst, now more accurst  
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,  
And more blasphemous ? which expect to rue.  
The kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,  
Permitted rather, and by thee usarp'd,

Other donation none thou canst produce :  
 If given, by whom but by the King of kings,  
 God over all supreme ? if given to thee,  
 By thee how fairly is the giver now  
 Repaid ? But gratitude in thee is lost  
 Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,  
 As offer them to me the Son of God,  
 To me my own, on such abhorred pact,  
 That I fall down and worship thee as God ?  
 Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st  
 That evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the fiend with fear abash'd reply'd.  
 Be not so fore offended, Son of God,  
 Though sons of God both angels are and men,  
 If I to try whether in higher sort  
 Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd  
 What both from men and angels I receive,  
 Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth  
 Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,  
 God of this world invok'd and world beneath ;  
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold  
 To me so fatal, me it most concerns,  
 The trial hath endamag'd thee no way,  
 Rather more honour left and more esteem ;  
 Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.  
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,  
 The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more  
 Advise thee ; gain them as thou can'st, or not.  
 And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd  
 Than to a worldly crown, addicted more  
 To contemplation and profound dispute,  
 As by that early action may be judg'd,

When slipping from thy mother's eye thou went'st  
 Alone into the temple; there wast found  
 Among the graveſt Rabbies diſputant  
 On points and questions fitting Moſes' chair,  
 Teaching not taught; the childhood ſhows the man,  
 As morning ſhows the day. Be famous then  
 By wiſdom; as thy empire muſt extend,  
 So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,  
 In knowledge, all things in it comprehend:  
 All knowledge is not couch'd in Moſes' law,  
 The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote;  
 The Gentiles alſo know, and write, and teach  
 To admiration, led by nature's light;  
 And with the Gentiles much thou muſt converſe,  
 Ruling them by perſuaſion as thou mean'ſt;  
 Without their learning how wilt thou with them,  
 Or they with thee hold converſation meet?  
 How wilt thou reaſon with them, how refute  
 Their idolifms, traditions, paradoxes?  
 Error by his own arms is beſt evinc'd.  
 Look once more ere we leave this ſpecular mount  
 Weſtward, much nearer by ſouth-weſt, behold  
 Where on th' Ægean ſhore a city ſtands  
 Built nobly, pure the air, and light the ſoil,  
 Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
 And eloquence, native to famous wits  
 Or hoſpitable, in her ſweet receſs,  
 City or ſuburban, ſtudious walks and ſhades;  
 See there the olive grove of Academe,  
 Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird  
 Trills her thick-warbled notes the ſummer long;  
 There ſlow'ry hill Hymettus with the ſound

Of bees industrious murmur oft invites  
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls  
 His whisp'ring stream; within the walls then view  
 The schools of ancient sages; his who bred  
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,  
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:  
 There thou shalt hear and learn the secret pow'r  
 Of harmony in tones and numbers hit  
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,  
 Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,  
 And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,  
 Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,  
 Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own.  
 Thence what the lofty grave tragœdians taught  
 In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best  
 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd,  
 In brief sententious precepts, while they treat  
 Of fate and chance, and change in human life;  
 High actions and high passions best describing:  
 Thence to the famous orators repair,  
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence  
 Wielded at will that fierce democratic,  
 Shook th' arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece  
 To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne:  
 To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,  
 From heav'n descended to the low-rooft house  
 Of Socrates; see there his tenement,  
 Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd  
 Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth  
 Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools  
 Of Academics old and new, with those  
 Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the sect

Epicurean, and the Stoic severe;  
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,  
 Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;  
 These rules will render thee a king compleat  
 Within thy self, much more with empire join'd.  
 To whom our Saviour sagely thus reply'd.  
 Think not, but that I know these things, or think  
 I know them not; not therefore am I short  
 Of knowing what I ought; he who receives  
 Light from above, from the fountain of light,  
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true;  
 But these are false, or little else but dreams,  
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.  
 The first and wisest of them all profess'd  
 To know this only, That he nothing knew;  
 The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits;  
 A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;  
 Others in virtue plac'd felicity,  
 But virtue join'd with riches and long life;  
 In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;  
 The Stoic last in philosophic pride,  
 By him call'd virtue; and his virtuous man,  
 Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing  
 Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,  
 As fearing God nor man, contemning all  
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,  
 Which when he lists he leaves, or boasts he can;  
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,  
 Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.  
 Alas, what can they teach, and not mislead,  
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,  
 And how the world began, and how man fell



Degraded by himself, on grace depending?  
 Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,  
 And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves  
 All glory arrogate, to God give none,  
 Rather accuse him under usual names,  
 Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite  
 Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these  
 True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion  
 Far worse, her false resemblance only meets  
 An empty cloud. However, many books,  
 Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads  
 Incessantly, and to his reading brings not  
 A spirit and judgment equal or superior,  
 (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?)  
 Uncertain and unsettled still remains,  
 Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,  
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys  
 And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;  
 As children gath'ring pebbles on the shore.  
 Or if I would delight my private hours  
 With music or with poem, where so soon  
 As in our native language can I find  
 That solace? all our law and story strew'd  
 With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,  
 Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,  
 That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare  
 That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;  
 Ill imitated, while they loudest sing  
 The vices of their deities and their own,  
 In fable, hymn, or song, so personating  
 Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.  
 Remove the swelling epithets thick laid

As varnish on a harlot's cheek ; the rest,  
 Thin fown with aught of profit or delight,  
 Will far be found unworthy to compare  
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,  
 Where God is prais'd aright, and god-like men  
 The Holiest of Holies, and his saints,  
 Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,  
 Unless where moral virtue is express'd  
 By light of nature not in all quite lost.  
 Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those  
 The top of eloquence, statists indeed,  
 And lovers of their country, as may seem ;  
 But herein to our prophets far beneath,  
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching  
 The solid rules of civil government,  
 In their majestic unaffected stile  
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.  
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,  
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,  
 What ruins kingdoms and lays cities flat ;  
 These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan now  
 Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,  
 Thus to our Saviour with stern brow reply'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,  
 Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught  
 By me propos'd in life contemplative,  
 Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,  
 What dost thou in this world ? the wilderness  
 For thee is fittest place ; I found thee there,  
 And thither will return thee ; yet remember  
 What I foretell thee, soon thou shalt have cause

To wish thou never hadst rejected thus  
 Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,  
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease  
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,  
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,  
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.  
 Now contrary, if I read aught in heav'n,  
 Or heav'n write aught of fate, by what the stars  
 Voluminous, or single characters,  
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell,  
 Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate,  
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,  
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;  
 A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,  
 Real or allegoric I discern not,  
 Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,  
 Without beginning; for no date prefix'd,  
 Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So saying he took (for still he knew his pow'r  
 Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness  
 Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,  
 Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,  
 As day-light sunk, and brought in lowring night  
 Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,  
 Privation mere of light and absent day.  
 Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind  
 After his airy jaunt, though hurry'd fore,  
 Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,  
 Wherever, under some concourse of shades  
 Whose branching arms thick interwin'd might shield  
 From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,  
 But shelter'd slept in vain; for at his head

The tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams  
 Disturb'd his sleep, and either tropic now  
 'Gan thunder, and both ends of heav'n the clouds  
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd  
 Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire  
 In ruin reconcil'd : Nor slept the winds  
 Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad  
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell  
 On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,  
 Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks  
 Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,  
 Or torn up sheer : Ill wast thou shrouded then,  
 O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st  
 Unshaken ; nor yet staid the terror there,  
 Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round  
 Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,  
 Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou  
 Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.  
 Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair  
 Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray ;  
 Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar  
 Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,  
 And grisly spectres, which the fiend had rais'd  
 To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.  
 And now the sun with more effectual beams  
 Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dry'd the wet  
 From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the birds,  
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,  
 After a night of storm so ruinous,  
 Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray  
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn ;  
 Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn

Was absent, after all his mischief done,  
 The prince of darkness, glad would also seem  
 Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,  
 Yet with no new device, they all were spent,  
 Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,  
 Desp'rate of better course, to vent his rage,  
 And mad despight to be so oft repell'd.  
 Him walking on a sunny hill he found,  
 Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;  
 Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,  
 And in a careless mood thus to him said.

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,  
 After a dismal night; I heard the wrack  
 As earth and sky would mingle; but myself  
 Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them  
 As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of heav'n,  
 Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,  
 Are to the main as inconsiderable,  
 And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze  
 To man's less universe, and soon are gone;  
 Yet as being oft times noxious where they light  
 On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,  
 Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,  
 Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,  
 They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:  
 This tempest at this desert most was bent;  
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.  
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject  
 The perfect season offer'd with my aid  
 To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong  
 All to the push of fate, pursue thy way  
 Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,



For both the when and how is no where told,  
 Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;  
 For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing  
 The time and means: Each act is rightliest done,  
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.  
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,  
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay  
 Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,  
 Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold;  
 Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,  
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies  
 May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on  
 And staid not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm  
 Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none;  
 I never fear'd they could, though noising loud  
 And threatening nigh, what they can do as signs  
 Betok'ning, or ill boding, I contemn  
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;  
 Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,  
 Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting  
 At least might seem to hold all pow'r of thee,  
 Ambitious sp'rit, and would'st be thought my God,  
 And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify  
 Me to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd  
 And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the fiend now swol'n with rage reply'd.  
 Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born;  
 For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,  
 Of the Messiah I have heard foretold  
 By all the prophets; of thy birth at length

Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,  
 And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field,  
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born,  
 From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye  
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,  
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;  
 'Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all  
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest,  
 Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from heav'n,  
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God below'd.  
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view  
 And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn  
 In what degree or meaning thou art call'd  
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense;  
 The Son of God I also am, or was,  
 And if I was, I am; relation stands;  
 All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought  
 In some respect far higher so declar'd.  
 Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,  
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;  
 Where by all best conjectures I collect  
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy.  
 Good reason then, if I before-hand seek  
 To understand my adversary, who  
 And what he is; his wisdom, pow'r, intent,  
 By parl, or composition, truce, or league  
 To win him, or win from him what I can.  
 And opportunity I here have had  
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee  
 Proof against all temptation as a rock  
 Of adamant, and as a center, firm,  
 To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good,

Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,  
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again :  
 Therefore to know what more thou art than man,  
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from heav'n,  
 Another method I must now begin.

So saying he caught him up, and without wing  
 Of hippogrif bore through the air sublime  
 Over the wilderness and o'er the plain ;  
 Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,  
 The holy city lifted high her tow'rs,  
 And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd  
 Her pile, far off appearing like a mount  
 Of alabaster, top'd with golden spires :  
 There on the highest pinnacle he set  
 The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn.

There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright  
 Will ask thee skill; I to thy father's house  
 Have brought thee, and highest plac'd, highest is best,  
 Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,  
 Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :  
 For it is written, He will give command  
 Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands  
 They shall uplift thee, lest at any time  
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus : Also it is written,  
 Tempt not the Lord thy God : He said and stood,  
 But Satan smitten with amazement fell.  
 As when earth's son Antaeus (to compare  
 Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove  
 With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,  
 Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,  
 Fresh from his fall and fiercer grapple join'd,

Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell;  
 So after many a foil the tempter proud,  
 Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride  
 Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.  
 And as that Theban monster that propos'd  
 Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd,  
 That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spight  
 Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep;  
 So struck with dread and anguish fell the fiend,  
 And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought  
 Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,  
 Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,  
 Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.  
 So Satan fell; and strait a fiery globe  
 Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,  
 Who on their plumy vans receiv'd him soft  
 From his uneasy station, and upbore  
 As on a floating couch through the blithe air,  
 Then in a flow'ry valley set him down  
 On a green bank, and set before him spread  
 A table of celestial food, divine,  
 Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,  
 And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,  
 That soon refresh'd him weary'd, and repair'd.  
 What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,  
 Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires  
 Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory  
 Over temptation, and the tempter proud.  
 True image of the Father, whether thron'd  
 In the bosom of bliss, and light of light  
 Conceiving, or remote from heav'n, enshrin'd  
 In fleshly tabernacle and human form,

Wand'ring the wilderness, whatever place,  
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing  
 The Son of God, with god-like force endu'd  
 Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne,  
 And thief of Paradise; him long of old  
 Thou didst debel, and down from heaven cast  
 With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd  
 Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing  
 Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,  
 And frustrated the conquest fraudulent:  
 He never more henceforth will dare set foot  
 In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:  
 For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,  
 A fairer Paradise is founded now  
 For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou  
 A Saviour, art come down to re-install  
 Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,  
 Of tempter and temptation without fear.  
 But thou, infernal serpent, shalt not long  
 Rule in the clouds; like an autumnal star,  
 Or lightning, thou shalt fall from heav'n, trod down  
 Under his feet: For proof, ere this thou feel'st  
 Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound  
 By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in hell  
 No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues  
 Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with awe  
 To dread the Son of God: He all unarm'd  
 Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice  
 From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,  
 Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly,  
 And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,  
 Lest he command them down into the deep



Bound, and to torment sent before their time.  
 Hail Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,  
 Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work  
 Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek  
 Sung victor, and from heav'nly feast refresh'd  
 Brought on his way with joy ; he unobserv'd  
 Home to his mother's house private return'd.

T H E E N D.

SAMSON AGONISTES,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

The AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON.

Tragoedia est imitatio actionis seriae, etc. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem. ARISTOT. Poet. Cap. 6.

E 3

DAVIDSON ACCREDITED

OF TWATIG ROOM

THE RECTOR

JOHN MILTON

THE RECTOR OF TWATIG ROOM  
JOHN MILTON

OF THAT SORT OF  
D R A M A T I C P O E M  
WHICH IS CALLED  
T R A G E D Y.

**T**RAGEDY, as it was anciently compos'd, hath been ever held the graveſt, moraleſt, and moſt profitable of all other poems : Therefore ſaid by Aristotle to be of power, by raiſing pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of thoſe and ſuch like paſſions, that is, to temper and reduce them to juſt meaſure with a kind of delight, ſtirr'd up by reading or ſeeing thoſe paſſions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his aſſertion : For ſo in phyſic, things of melancholic hue and quality are uſed againſt melancholy, ſour againſt ſour, ſalt to remove ſalt humours. Hence philoſophers and other graveſt writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illuſtrate their diſcourſe. The apoſtle Paul himſelf thought it not unworthy to inſert a verſe of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33. and Paracus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts diſtinguiſh'd each by a chorus of heavenly harpings, and ſong between. Heretofore men in higheſt dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to compoſe a tragedy. Of that honour Dionyſius the elder was no leſs ambitious, than

before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his Ajax, but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is entitled, *Christ Suffering*: This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle. In behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before hand be may epistled; that chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antistrophe*, or *Epod*, which were a kind stanza's fram'd only for the music, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material;



or being divided into stanza's or pauses, they may be called Allacostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such oeconomy or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum, they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequall'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends is, according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

## The ARGUMENT.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival-day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or shew his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with

absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him; the chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: In the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

**The PERSONS.**

**SAMSON.**

**MANOA**, the father of Samson.

**DALILA**, his wife.

**HARAPHA** of Gath,

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

*The Scene before the prison in Gaza.*

## SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAMS. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little further on;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade,  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,  
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,  
Where I a pris'ner chain'd, scarce freely draw  
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,  
Unwholsome draught; but here I feel amends,  
The breath of heav'n fresh blowing, pure and sweet,  
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.  
This day a solemn feast the people hold  
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid  
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest  
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave  
Retiring from the pop'lar noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some ease,  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind  
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm  
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,  
But rush upon me thronging, and present  
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.  
O wherefore was my birth from heav'n foretold  
Twice by an angel; who at last in sight  
Of both my parents all in flames ascended  
From off the altar, where an offering burn'd,  
As in a fiery column charioting  
His God-like presence, and from some great act



Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race ?  
Why was my breeding order'd and preferib'd  
As of a person separate to God,  
Design'd for great exploits; if I must die  
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,  
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;  
To grind in brazen fetters under task,  
With this heav'n-gifted strength ? O glorious strength  
Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd  
Lower than bondslave ! Promise was that I  
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver ;  
Ask for this great deliv'rer now, and find him  
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,  
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke :  
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt  
Divine prediction : What if all foretold  
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,  
Whom have I to complain of but myself ?  
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,  
Under the seal of silence could not keep,  
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,  
O'ercome with importunity and tears.  
O impotence of mind, in body strong !  
But what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burthenfome,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,  
But to subserve where wisdom bears command !  
God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal  
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.  
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will

Of highest dispensation, which herein  
Haply had ends above my reach to know :  
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
And proves the source of all my miseries ;  
So many, and so huge, that each apart  
Wou'd ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,  
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !  
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,  
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !  
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,  
And all her various objects of delight  
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,  
Inferior to the vilest now become  
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me,  
They creep, yet see ; I dark in light expos'd  
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,  
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
In pow'r of others, never in my own ;  
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.  
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse  
Without all hope of day !  
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,  
Let there be light, and light was over all ;  
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree ?  
The sun to me is dark  
And silent as the moon,  
When she deserts the night  
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.  
Since light so necessary is to life,  
And almost life itself, if it be true  
That light is in the soul,

She all in ev'ry part; why was the sight  
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,  
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd,  
And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,  
That she might look at will through ev'ry pore?  
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,  
As in the land of darkness yet in light,  
To live a life half dead, a living death,  
And bury'd; but O yet more miserable!  
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,  
Bury'd, yet not exempt  
By privilege of death and burial  
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,  
But made hereby obnoxious more  
To all the miseries of life,  
Life in captivity  
Among inhuman foes.  
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear  
The tread of many feet steering this way;  
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare  
At my affliction, and perhaps t' insult,  
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

CHOR. This, this is he; softly a while,  
Let us not break in upon him;  
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!  
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,  
With languish'd head unpropt,  
As one past hope, abandon'd,  
And by himself giv'n over;  
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds  
O'erworn and soil'd;  
Or do my eyes misrepresent? can this be he,

That heroic, that renown'd,  
Irresistable Samson; whom unarm'd [stand;  
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could with-  
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,  
Ran on embattel'd armies clad in iron,  
And weaponless himself,  
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,  
Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail  
Adamantean proof;  
But safest he who stood aloof,  
When insupportable his foot advanc'd,  
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite  
Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turn'd  
Their plated backs under his heel;  
Or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.  
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,  
A thousand foreskins fell, the flow'r of Palestine,  
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day. [bore  
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders  
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,  
Up to the hill of Hebron, seat of giants old,  
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;  
Like whom the Gentiles sign to bear up heav'n.  
Which shall I first bewail,  
Thy bondage or lost sight,  
Prison within prison  
Inseparably dark?  
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)  
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul

(Which men enjoying light oft without cause com-  
 Imprison'd now indeed, [plain]  
 In real darkness of the body dwells,  
 Shut up from outward light  
 T' incorporate with gloomy night;  
 For inward light alas  
 Puts forth no visual beam.  
 O mirror of our fickle state,  
 Since man on earth unparallel'd!  
 The rarer thy example stands,  
 By how much from the top of wond'rous glory,  
 Strongest of mortal men,  
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.  
 For him I reckon not in high estate,  
 Whom long descent of birth  
 Or the sphere of fortune raises;  
 But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,  
 Might have subdu'd the earth,  
 Universally crown'd with highest praises.

SAMS. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air  
 Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHOR. He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in  
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief; [might,  
 We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown  
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale  
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,  
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,  
 Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage  
 The tumors of a troubled mind,  
 And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

SAMS. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn  
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,



How counterfeit a coin they are who friends  
 Bear in their superscription (of the most  
 I would be understood) in prosp'rous days  
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,  
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,  
 How many evils have inclos'd me round;  
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,  
 Blindness, for, had I sight, confus'd with shame,  
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,  
 Who, like a foolish pilot have shipwreck'd  
 My vessel trust'd to me from above,  
 Gloriously rigg'd, and for a word, a tear,  
 Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God  
 To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,  
 Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool  
 In every street? do they not say, how well  
 Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?  
 Immeasurable strength they might behold  
 In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;  
 This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,  
 These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

CHOR. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men  
 Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd;  
 And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.  
 Deject not then so overmuch thyself,  
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;  
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder  
 Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather  
 Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,  
 At least of thine own nation, and as noble.

SAMS. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd  
 Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed

The daughter of an infidel : they knew not  
 That what I motion'd was of God ; I knew  
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd  
 The marriage on ; that by occasion hence  
 I might begin Israel's deliverance,  
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.  
 She proving false, the next I took to wife  
 (O that I never had ! fond wish too late,)  
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,  
 That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.  
 I thought it lawful from my former act,  
 And the same end ; still watching to oppress  
 Israel's oppressors : Of what now I suffer,  
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself, ]  
 Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness !)  
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

CHOR. In seeking just occasion to provoke  
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness :  
 Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

SAMS. That fault I take not on me, but transfer  
 On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,  
 Who seeing those great acts, which God had done  
 Singly by me against their conquerors,  
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd  
 Deliverance offer'd : I on th' other side  
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,  
 The deeds themselves, tho' mute, spoke loud the doer ;  
 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem  
 To count them things worth notice, till at length  
 Their lords the Philistines with gather'd pow'rs,  
 Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then

Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd,  
Not flying but fore-casting in what place  
To set upon them, what advantag'd best :  
Mean while the men of Judah, to prevent  
The harrafs of their land, beset me round;  
I willingly on some conditions came  
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me  
To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey,  
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads  
'Touch'd with the flame: On their whole host I flew  
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd  
Their choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.  
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,  
They had by this possess'd the tow'rs of Gath,  
And lorded over them whom now they serve :  
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt  
And by their vices brought to servitude,  
Than to love bondage more than liberty,  
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;  
And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd  
As their deliv'rer; if he aught begin,  
How frequent to desert him, and at last  
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

CHOR. Thy words to my remembrance bring  
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel  
Their great deliverer contemn'd,  
The matchless Gideon in pursuit  
Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings :  
And how ingrateful Ephraim  
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,  
Not worse than by his shield and spear,

Defended Israel from the Ammonite,  
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride  
In that fore battle, when so many dy'd  
Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,  
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

SAMS. Of such examples add me to the roll,  
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

CHOR. Just are the ways of God,  
And justifiable to men ;  
Unless there be who think not God at all :  
If any be, they walk obscure ;  
For of such doctrine never was there school,  
But the heart of the fool,  
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,  
As to his own edicts found contradicting,  
Then give the reigns to wandering thought,  
Regardless of his glory's diminution ;  
Till by their own perplexities involv'd  
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,  
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' Interminable,  
And tie him to his own prescript,  
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,  
And hath full right t' exempt  
Whom so it pleases him by choice  
From national obstriction, without taint  
Of sin, or legal debt ;  
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,  
Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause

To set his people free,  
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,  
 Against his vow of strictest purity,  
 To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,  
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down reason then, at least vain reasonings down,  
 Though reason here aver  
 That moral verdict quits her of unclean :  
 Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy rev'rend sire  
 With careful step, locks white as down,  
 Old Manoa : Advise  
 Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

SAMS. Ay me, another inward grief awak'd  
 With mention of that name renews th' assault.

MAN. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,  
 Though in this uncouth place ; if old respect,  
 As I suppose, towards your once glory'd friend,  
 My son now captive, hither hath inform'd  
 Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age  
 Came lagging after ; say if he be here.

CHOR. As signal now in low dejected state  
 As erst in highest, behold him where he lies,

MAN. O miserable change ! is this the man,  
 That invincible Samson, far renown'd,  
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength  
 Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,  
 None offering fight ; who single combatant  
 Duell'd their armies rank'd in proud array,  
 Himself an army, now unequal match  
 To save himself against a coward arm'd  
 At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust



In mortal strength ! and oh what not in man  
 Deceivable and vain ? Nay, what thing good  
 Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane ?  
 I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness  
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a son,  
 And such a son as all men hail'd me happy ;  
 Who would be now a father in my stead ?  
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,  
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd ?  
 Why are his gifts desireable, to tempt  
 Our earnest pray'rs, then given with solemn hand  
 As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind ?  
 For this did th' angel twice descend ? for this  
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant  
 Select and sacred, glorious for a while,  
 The miracle of men ; then in an hour  
 Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
 Thy foes derision, captive, poor and blind,  
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves ?  
 Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once  
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,  
 He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall  
 Subject him to so foul indignities,  
 Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

SAMs. Appoint not heav'nly disposition, father ;  
 Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me  
 But justly ; I myself have brought them on,  
 Sole author, I, sole cause : If aught seem vile,  
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd  
 The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge  
 Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,  
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.

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This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,  
But warn'd by oft experience ; did not she  
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal  
The secret wrested from me in her height  
Of nuptial love profess, carrying it strait  
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,  
And rivals ? in this other was there found  
More faith ? who also in her prime of love,  
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd  
Her spurious first-born, treason against me ?  
Thrice she assay'd with flatt'ring pray'rs and sighs,  
And amorous reproaches, to win from me  
My capital secret, in what part my strength  
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know :  
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport  
Her importunity, each time perceiving  
How openly, and with what impudence  
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse  
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt  
She sought to make me traitor to myself ;  
Yet the fourth time, when must'ring all her wiles,  
With blandish'd parleys, feminine assaults,  
Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night  
To storm me over-watch'd, and weary'd out.  
At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,  
Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd  
Might easily have shook off all her snares :  
But foul effeminacy held me yok'd  
Her bond-slave ; O indignity, O blot  
To honour and religion ! servile mind  
Rewarded well with servile punishment !

The base degree to which I now am fall'n,  
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base  
As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
That saw not how degen'rately I serv'd.

MAN. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son,  
Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead  
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st  
Find some occasion to infect our foes.  
I state not that; this I am sure, our foes  
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee  
Their captive and their triumph; thou the sooner  
Temptation found'st or over-potent charms  
To violate the sacred trust of silence  
Deposited within thee; which to have kept  
Tacit, was in thy pow'r: True; and thou bear'st  
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;  
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying  
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,  
This day the Philistines a pop'lar feast  
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim  
Great pomp and sacrifice, and praises loud  
To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd  
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,  
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.  
So Dagon shall be magnify'd, and God,  
Besides whom is no god, compar'd with idols,  
Disglorify'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn  
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;  
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,

Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

SAMS. Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought  
To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high  
Among the heathen round; to God have brought  
Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths  
Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal  
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt  
In feeble hearts, propense enough before  
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;  
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,  
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not  
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.  
This only hope relieves me, that the strife  
With me hath end; all the contest is now  
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd  
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
His deity comparing and preferring  
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,  
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,  
But will arise and his great name assert:  
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive  
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him  
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,  
And with confusion blank his worshippers. [words

MAN. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these  
I as a prophecy receive; for God,  
Nothing more certain, will not long defer  
To vindicate the glory of his name  
Against all competition, nor will long  
Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord,

Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done !  
 Thou must not in the meanwhile here forgot  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight  
 Neglected. I already have made way  
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat  
 About thy ranfome: Well they may by this  
 Have fatisfied their utmost of revenge  
 By pains and flav'ries, worse than death, inflicted  
 On thee, who now no more can do them harm.

SAMS. Spare that propofal, father, spare the  
 Of that follicitation; let me here, [trouble  
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;  
 And expiate, if poffible, my crime,  
 Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd  
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
 How heinous had the fact been, how deferving  
 Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded  
 All friendship, and avoided as a blab,  
 The mark of fool fet on his front? but I  
 God's counfel have not kept, his holy fecret  
 Prefumptuoufly have publish'd, impioufly,  
 Weakly at leaft, and shamefully: a fin  
 That Gentiles in their parables condemn  
 To their abyfs and horrid pains confin'd.

MAN. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,  
 But act not in thy own affliction, fon;  
 Repent the fin, but if the punishment  
 Thou can'ft avoid, felf-prefervation bids;  
 Or th' execution leave to high difpofal,  
 And let another hand, not thine, exact  
 Thy penal forfeit from thyfelf; perhaps  
 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;



Who ever more approves and more accepts  
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)  
Him who imploring mercy sues for life,  
Than who self-rigorous chuses death as due;  
Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd  
For self-offence, more than for God offended.  
Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows  
But God hath set before us, to return thee  
Home to thy country and his sacred house,  
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert  
His further ire, with prayers and vows renew'd?

SAMS. His pardon I implore; but as for life,  
To what end should I seek it? when in strength  
All mortals I excell'd; and great in hopes  
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts  
Of birth from heav'n foretold and high exploits,  
Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond  
The sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,  
Fearless of danger, like a petty God  
I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded  
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.  
Then swell'd with pride into the snare I fell  
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,  
Soft'ned with pleasure and voluptuous life;  
At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge  
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
Of a deceitful concubine, who shorn me  
Like a tame weather, all my precious fleece,  
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,  
Shaven and disarm'd among mine enemies.

CHOR. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,

Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
 Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing ruby  
 Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell  
 Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,  
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

SAMS. Where-ever fountain or fresh current flow'd  
 Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure  
 With touch aethereal of heav'n's fiery rod,  
 I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying  
 Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape  
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

CHOR. O madness, to think use of strongest wines  
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health,  
 When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear  
 His mighty champion, strong above compare,  
 Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

SAMS. But what avail'd this temp'rance, not compleat  
 Against another object more enticing?  
 What boots it at one gate to make defence,  
 And at another to let in the foe,  
 Effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,  
 Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,  
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve  
 My nation, and the work from heav'n impos'd,  
 But to sit idle on the household-hearth,  
 A burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,  
 Or pity'd object, these redundant locks  
 Robustious to no purpose clustring down,  
 Vain monuments of strength; till length of years  
 And sedentary numbness craze my limbs  
 To a contemptible old age obscure?  
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread

Till vermin or the draff of servile food  
 Consume me, and oft invoked death  
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains. [gift

MAN. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that  
 Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy them ?  
 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,  
 Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn.  
 But God who caus'd a fountain at thy pray'r  
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst t' allay  
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy  
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,  
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;  
 And I persuade me so ; why else this strength  
 Mirac'lous yet remaining in those locks ?  
 His might continues in thee not for naught,  
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

SAMS. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,  
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,  
 Nor th' other light of life continue long,  
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand :  
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
 My hopes all flat, nature within me seems  
 In all her functions weary of herself ;  
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,  
 And I shall shortly be with them at rest.

MAN. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed  
 From anguish of the mind and humours black,  
 That mingle with thy fancy. I however  
 Must not omit a father's timely care  
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance  
 By ransom, or how else : Meanwhile be calm,  
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.

SAMS. O that torment should not be confin'd  
To the body's wounds and sores,  
With maladies innumerable  
In heart, head, breast, and reins ;  
But must secret passage find  
To th' inmost mind,  
There exercise all his fierce accidents,  
And on her purest spirits prey,  
As on entrails, joints and limbs,  
With answerable pains, but more intense,  
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me  
As a lingering disease,  
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,  
Nor less than wounds immedicable  
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,  
To black mortification.  
Thoughts my tormentors arm'd with deadly stings  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb  
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,  
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.  
Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er  
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure :  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heav'n's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,  
His destin'd from the womb,  
Promis'd by heav'nly message twice descending,  
Under his special eye  
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain ;

He led me on to mightiest deeds  
 Above the nerve of mortal arm  
 Against th' uncircumcis'd, our enemies :  
 But now hath cast me off as never known,  
 And to those cruel enemies,  
 Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,  
 Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss  
 Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated  
 The subject of their cruelty or scorn.  
 Nor am I in the list of them that hope ;  
 Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless ;  
 This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,  
 No long petition, speedy death,  
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

CHOR. Many are the sayings of the wise  
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,  
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude ;  
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,  
 All chances incident to man's frail life,  
 Consolatories writ  
 With study'd argument, and much persuasion sought,  
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought :  
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound  
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint ;  
 Unless he feel within  
 Some source of consolation from above,  
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,  
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man !  
 That thou tow'rd's him with hand so various,  
 Or might I say contrarious,



Temper'ft thy providence through his short courfe,  
Not ev'nly, as thou rul'ft  
Th' angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,  
Irrational and brute.  
Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
That wand'ring loofe about,  
Grow up and perifh, as the fummer-fly,  
Heads without name no more remember'd,  
But fuch as thou haft folemnly elected,  
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,  
To fome great work, thy glory,  
And people's fafety, which in part they effect;  
Yet toward thefe thus dignify'd, thou oft  
Amidft their height of noon, [gard  
Changeft thy countenance, and thy hand with no re-  
Of higheft favours pafl

From thee on them, or them to thee of fervice:

Nor only doft degrade them, or remit  
To life obfcur'd, which were a fair difmiffion,  
But throw'ft them lower than thou didft exalt them  
Unfeemly falls in human eye, [high,  
Too grievous for the trefpafs or omiffion;  
Oft leav'ft them to the hostile fword  
Of Heathen and profane, their carcafes  
To dogs and fowls a prey, or elfe captiv'd;  
Or to th' unjuft tribunals, under change of times,  
And condemnation of th' ingrateful multitude.  
If thefe they 'fcape, perhaps in poverty  
With ficknefs and difeafe thou bow'ft them down,  
Painful difeafes and deform'd,  
In crude old age;  
Though not difordinate, yet caufelefs fuff'ring

The punishment of dissolute days : In fine,  
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,  
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,  
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.

What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?

Behold him in his state calamitous, and turn  
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?

Female of sex it seems,

That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,

Comes this way sailing

Like a stately ship

Of Tarsus, bound for th' isles

Of Javan or Gadire,

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,

Courted by all the winds that hold them play.

An amber scent of odorous perfume

Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;

Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,

And now at nearer view, no other certain

Than Dalila thy wife. [near me.

SAMS: My wife, my trayt'ress, let her not come

CHOR. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee

Aboutt'have spoke, but now, with head declin'd, [fix'd.

Like a fair flow'r surcharg'd with dew, she weeps,

And words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,

Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil;

But now again she makes address to speak.

DAL. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution

I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,

Which to have merited, without excuse,  
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears  
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew  
In the perverse event than I foresaw)  
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon  
No way assur'd. But conjugal affection  
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt,  
Hath led me on desirous to behold  
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,  
If aught in my ability may serve  
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease  
Thy mind with what amends is in my pow'r,  
Though late, yet in some part to recompense  
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.

SAMS. Out, out Hyaena! these are thy wonted  
And arts of ev'ry woman false like thee, [arts,  
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,  
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,  
And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,  
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,  
Not truly penitent, but chief to try,  
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,  
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:  
Then with more cautious and instructed skill  
Again transgresses, and again submits;  
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd,  
With goodness princip'd not to reject  
The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
Entangl'd with a poisonous bosom snake,  
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,  
As I by thee, to ages an example.

DAL. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour  
To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd  
By itself, with aggravations not surcharg'd,  
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,  
I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.  
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
In me, but incident to all our sex,  
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune  
Of secrets, then with like infirmity  
To publish them, both common female faults:  
Was it not weakness also to make known  
For importunity, that is, for naught,  
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?  
'To what I did thou shewd'st me first the way.  
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not:  
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty;  
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.  
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,  
So near related, or the same of kind,  
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine  
The gentler, if severely thou exact not  
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.  
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,  
The jealousy of love, pow'rful of sway,  
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,  
Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable  
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me  
As her at Timna; fought by all means therefore  
How to endear and hold thee to me firmest:  
No better way I saw than by importuning

To learn thy secrets, get into my pow'r  
 Thy key of strength and safety : Thou wilt say,  
 Why then reveal'd ? I was assur'd by those  
 Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd  
 Against thee but safe custody and hold :  
 That made for me, I knew that liberty  
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,  
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears,  
 Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;  
 Here I should still enjoy thee day and night  
 Mine and love's pris'ner, not the Philistines,  
 Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,  
 Fearless at home of partners in my love.  
 These reasons in love's law have pass'd for good,  
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;  
 And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe.  
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.  
 Be not unlike all others, not austere  
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.  
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,  
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

SAMs. How cunningly the forcerefs displays  
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ?  
 That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,  
 By this appears : I gave, thou say'st, th' example,  
 I led the way, bitter reproach, but true ;  
 I to myself was false ere thou to me ;  
 Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,  
 Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest  
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,  
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
 Confess it feign'd. Weakness is thy excuse,



And I believe it, weakness to resist  
 Philistian gold : If weakness may excuse,  
 What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
 Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?  
 All wickedness is weakness ; that plea therefore  
 With God or man will gain thee no remission.  
 But love constrain'd thee ; call it furious rage  
 To satisfy thy lust : Love seeks to have love ;  
 My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way  
 To raise in me inexpiable hate,  
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd ?  
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,  
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

DAL. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea  
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,  
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,  
 What sieges girt me round, ere I consented ;  
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,  
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.  
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,  
 That wrought with me : Thou know'st the magistrates  
 And princes of my country came in person,  
 Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,  
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty  
 And of religion, press'd how just it was,  
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap  
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd  
 Such numbers of our nation : And the priest  
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,  
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods  
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious  
 Dishonourer of Dagon : What had I

T' oppose against such pow'rful arguments?  
Only my love of thee held long debate;  
And combated in silence all these reasons  
With hard contest: At length that ground'd maxim,  
So ripe and celebrated in the mouths  
Of wisest men, that to the public good  
Private respects must yield, with grave authority  
Took full possession of me and prevail'd;  
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoining.

SAMs. I thought where all thy circling wiles would  
In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy. [end;  
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,  
Been, as it ought, sincere, it wou'd have taught thee  
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.  
I before all the daughters of my tribe  
And of my nation, chose thee from among  
My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,  
Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,  
Not out of levity, but overpow'r'd  
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;  
Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then  
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?  
Then, as since then, thy country's foe protest?  
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave  
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,  
Nor under their protection, but my own,  
Thou mine, not theirs: If aught against my life  
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
Against the law of nature, law of nations,  
No more thy country, but an impious crew  
Of men conspiring to uphold their state  
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends

For which our country is a name so dear;  
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal may'd thee;  
To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable  
T' acquit themselves and prosecute their foes.  
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction  
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;  
Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd.  
These false pretexes and varnish'd colours failing.  
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

DAL. In argument with men a woman ever  
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

SAM. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,  
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken  
In what I thought would have succeeded best.  
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson,  
Afford me place to shew what recompence  
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,  
Misguided; only what remains past cure  
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist  
T' afflict thyself in vain: Though sight be lost,  
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd  
Where other senses want not their delights  
At home in leisure and domestic ease,  
Exempt from many a care and chance to which  
Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.  
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting  
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
From forth this loathsome prison-house, t' abide  
With me, where my redoubl'd love and care  
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,  
May ever tend about thee to old age

With all things grateful chear'd, and so supply'd  
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

SAM. No, no, of my condition take no care;  
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:  
Nor think me so unwary or accurst  
To bring my feet again into the snare  
Where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,  
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;  
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms  
No more on me have pow'r, their force is null'd;  
So much of adders wisdom I have learn'd  
To fence my ear against thy forceries.  
If in my flow'r of youth and strength, when all men  
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st hate me  
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;  
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
Deceivable, in most things as a child  
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,  
And last neglected? how would'st thou insult,  
When I must live uxorious to thy will  
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,  
Bearing my words and doings to the lords  
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?  
This jail I count the house of liberty  
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

DAL. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

SAM. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.  
At distance I forgive thee, go with that;  
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works  
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
Among illustrious women, faithful wives:

Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold  
Of matrimonial treason : So farewell.

DAL. I see thou art implacable, more deaf  
To pray'rs than winds and seas, yet winds to seas  
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore :  
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,  
Eternal tempest never to be calm'd !  
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing  
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?  
Bid go with evil omen and the brand  
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd ?  
To mix with thy concernments I desist  
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.  
Fame, if not double-fac'd, is double-mouth'd,  
And with contrary blasts proclaims most deeds ;  
On both his wings, one black, the other white,  
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.  
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd  
In Dan, in Judah, and the bord'ring tribes  
To all posterity may stand defam'd,  
With malediction mention'd, and the blot  
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.  
But in my country where I most desire,  
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
I shall be nam'd among the famousst  
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,  
Living and dead recorded, who to save  
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose  
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb  
With odours visited and annual flow'rs ;  
Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim,  
Jael, who with inhospitable guile



Smote Sisera sleeping through the temples nail'd,  
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
 The public marks of honour and reward  
 Confer'd upon me, for the piety  
 Which to my country I was judg'd to have shewn.  
 At this whoever envies or repines,  
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHOR. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting  
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

SAMS. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,  
 And aggravate my folly, who committed  
 To such a viper his most sacred trust  
 Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

CHOR. Yet beauty, tho' injurious, hath strange pow'r,  
 After offence returning, to regain  
 Love once possess'd, nor can be easily  
 Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt  
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAMS. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,  
 Not wedlock-treachery endang'ring life.

CHOR. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,  
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,  
 That woman's love can win or long inherit;  
 But what it is, hard is to say,  
 Harder to hit,

(Which way soever men refer it)  
 Much like thy riddle, Samson in one day  
 Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these or all, the Timnian bride  
 Had not so soon preferr'd  
 Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compar'd,  
 Successor in thy bed,

Nor both so loosely disally'd  
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously  
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.  
Is it for that such outward ornament  
Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts  
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,  
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend,  
Or value what is best  
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?  
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,  
Of constancy no root infix'd,  
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best  
Seeming at first all heav'nly under virgin veil,  
Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn  
Intestine, far within defensive arms  
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue  
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms  
Draws him awry enslav'd  
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd  
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.  
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck  
Embark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favour'd of heav'n who finds  
One virtuous rarely found,  
That in domestic good combines:  
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:  
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,  
And all temptation can remove,  
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law

Gave to the man despotic power  
 Over his female in due awe,  
 Nor from that right to part an hour,  
 Smile she or lowr :  
 So shall he least confusion draw  
 On his whole life, not sway'd  
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd.

But had we best retire, I see a storm ?

SAMS. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

CHOR. But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAMS. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

CHOR. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear  
 The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue  
 Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,  
 The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
 Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.  
 Comes he in peace ? what wind hath blown him hither  
 I less conjecture than when first I saw  
 The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :  
 His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

SAMS. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

CHOR. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

HAR. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,  
 As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
 Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,  
 Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd  
 As Og or Anak and the Emims old  
 That Kiriathaim held, thou know'st me now  
 If thou at all art known. Much I have heard  
 Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd  
 Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,  
 That I was never present on the place

Of those encounters, where we might have try'd  
Each other's force in camp or list'd field:  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,  
If thy appearance answer loud report.

SAMS. The way to know were not to see but taste.

HAR. Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gyves and the mill had tam'd thee: O that fortune  
Had brought me to the field, where thou art fam'd  
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;  
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,  
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown:  
So had the glory of prowess been recover'd  
To Palestine, won by a Philistine  
From the unfore-skin'd race, of whom thou bear'st  
The highest name for valiant acts, that honour  
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,  
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out. [but do

SAMS. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done,  
What then thou wouldst, thou seest it in thy hand.

HAR. To combat with a blind man I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

SAMS. Such usage as your honourable lords  
Afford me assassinated and betray'd,  
Who durst not with their whole united pow'rs  
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,  
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes  
Close banded durst attack me, no not sleeping,  
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold  
Breaking her marriage-faith to circumvent me.  
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd  
Some narrow place inclos'd, where fight may give thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;  
 Then put on all thy gorgeous arms; thy helmet  
 And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,  
 Vant-brass and greaves, and gauntlet, add thy spear;  
 A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield;  
 I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,  
 And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd iron,  
 Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head,  
 That in a little time while breath remains thee,  
 Thou oft shalt with thyself at Gath to boast  
 Again in safety what thou wouldst have done  
 To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

HAR. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms  
 Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,  
 Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
 And black enchantments, some magician's art, [heav'n  
 Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from  
 Feign'd'st at thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair,  
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
 Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back  
 Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

SAM'S. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;  
 My trust is in the living God, who gave me  
 At my nativity this strength, diffus'd  
 No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,  
 Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,  
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.  
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,  
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid  
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him  
 How highly it concerns his glory now  
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,



Which I to be the pow'r of Israel's God  
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
Off'ring to combat thee his champion bold  
With th' utmost of his godhead seconded:  
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow  
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

HAR. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be,  
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off  
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up  
Into thy enemies hand, permitted them  
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee  
Into the common prison; there to grind  
Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,  
As good for nothing else, no better service  
With those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match:  
For valour to assail, nor by the sword  
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour  
But by the barber's razor best subdu'd.

SAMS. All these indignities, for such they are  
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,  
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me  
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,  
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:  
In confidence whereof, I once again  
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight;  
By combat to decide whose god is God,  
Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore. [trusting

HAR. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in  
He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. [me these?

SAMS. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove

HAR. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?  
 Their magistrates confess'd it, when they took thee  
 As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound  
 Into our hands : For hadst thou not committed  
 Notorious murder on those thirty men  
 At Askalon, who never did thee harm,  
 Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?  
 The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,  
 Went up with armed pow'rs thee only seeking,  
 To others did no violence nor spoil.

SAMS. Among the daughters of the Philistines  
 I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;  
 And in your city held my nuptial feast:  
 But your ill-meaning politician lords,  
 Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,  
 Appointed to await me thirty spies,  
 Who threatning cruel death constrain'd the bride  
 To wring from me and tell to them my secret,  
 That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.  
 When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,  
 As on my enemies, where-ever chanc'd,  
 I us'd hostility, and took their spoil  
 To pay my underminers in their coin.  
 My nation was subjected to your lords.  
 It was the force of conquest; force with force  
 Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.  
 But I a private person, whom my country  
 As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd  
 Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.  
 I was no private but a person rais'd  
 With strength sufficient and command from heav'n  
 To free my country; if their servile minds

Me their deliverer sent would not receive,  
 But to their masters gave me up for nought,  
 Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.  
 I was to do my part from heav'n assign'd,  
 And had perform'd it, if my known offence  
 Had not disabl'd me, not all your force.  
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,  
 Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,  
 Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,  
 As petty enterptise of small enforce.

HAR. With thee, a man condemn'd, a slave enroll'd,  
 Due by the law to capital punishment?

To fight with thee no man of arms will deign. [me,

SAMS. Can'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey  
 To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?  
 Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;  
 But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

HAR. O Baal-zebub! can my years unus'd  
 Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

SAMS. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand  
 Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,  
 My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

HAR. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

SAMS. Go baffle'd coward, lest I run upon thee,  
 Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
 And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
 Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down  
 To th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

HAR. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament  
 These braveries in irons loaden on thee.

CHOR. His giant-ship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,  
 Stalking with less unconscionable strides,

And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

SAMS. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,  
Though fame divulge him father of five sons  
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

CHOR. He will directly to the lords, I fear,  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other yet farther to afflict thee.

SAMS. He must alledge some cause, and offer'd fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
Whether he durst accept th' offer or not,  
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.  
Much more affliction than already felt  
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;  
If they intend advantage of my labours,  
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping  
With no small profit daily to my owners.  
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,  
The worst that he can give, to me the best.  
Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHOR. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving  
To the spirits of just men long oppress'd!  
When God into the hands of their deliverer  
Puts invincible might  
To quell the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,  
The brute and boist'rous force of violent men  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue  
The righteous, and all such as honour truth;  
He all their ammunition

And feats of war defeats  
With plain heroic magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour arm'd,  
Their armories and magazines contemns,  
Renders them useless, while  
With winged expedition,  
Swift as the light'ning glance, he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who surpriz'd  
Lose their defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own deliverer,  
And victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.  
Either of these is in thy lot,  
Samson, with might endu'd  
Above the sons of men; but sight bereav'd  
May chance to number thee with those  
Whom patience finally must crown.

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,  
Labouring thy mind  
More than the working day thy hands.  
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,  
For I descry this way  
Some other tending, in his hand  
A scepter or quaint staff he bears,  
Comes on amain, speed in his look.  
By his habit I discern him now  
A public officer, and now at hand.  
His message will be short and voluble.

OFF. Hebrews, the pris'ner Samson here I seek.

CHOR. His manacles remark him, there he sits.



OFF. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;  
 This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,  
 With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;  
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,  
 And now some public proof thereof require  
 To honour this great feast, and great assembly;  
 Rise therefore with all speed and come along,  
 Where I will see thee hearten'd and fresh clad  
 To appear as fits before th' illustrious lords. [them,

SAMS. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell  
 Our law forbids at their religious rites  
 My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

OFF. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

SAMS. Have they not sword-players, and ev'ry sort  
 Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,  
 Juglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,  
 But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,  
 And over-labour'd at their public mill,  
 To make them sport with blind activity?  
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels  
 On my refusal to distress me more,  
 Or make a game of my calamities?  
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

OFF. Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

SAMS. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.  
 Can they think me so broken, so debas'd  
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever  
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?  
 Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,  
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief  
 To shew them feats, and play before their god,  
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me

Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

OFF. My message was impos'd on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay: Is this thy resolution?

SAMS. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

OFF. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

SAMS. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

CHOR. Consider, Samson, matters now are strain'd  
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;  
He's gone, and who knows how he may report  
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?  
Expect another message more imperious,  
More lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

SAMS. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression, so requite  
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to idols;  
A Nazarite in place abominable  
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?  
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,  
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

CHOR. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Phil-  
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean. [stines

SAMS. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawful to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil power. [not.

CHOR. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile

SAMS. Where outward force constrains, the sentence  
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, [holds.  
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,  
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease

God for the fear of man, and man prefer,  
 Set God behind: Which in his jealousy  
 Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.  
 Yet that he may dispense with me or thee  
 Present in temples at idolatrous rites  
 For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

CHOR. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my

SAMS. Be of good courage, I begin to feel [reach.  
 Some rousing motions in me, which dispose  
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
 I with this messenger will go along,  
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour  
 Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.  
 If there be aught of presage in the mind,  
 This day will be remarkable in my life  
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

CHOR. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

OFF. Samson this second message from our lords  
 To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,  
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,  
 And dar'st thou at our sending and command  
 Dispute thy coming? come without delay;  
 Or we shall find such engines to assail  
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,  
 Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

SAMS. I could be well content to try their art,  
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.  
 Yet knowing their advantages too many,  
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.  
 Masters commands come with power resistless  
 To such as owe them absolute subjection:

And for a life who will not change his purpose?  
(So mutable are all the ways of men)  
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

OFF. I praise thy resolution; doff these links :  
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords  
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAMS. Brethren farewell, your company along  
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them  
To see me girt with friends ; and how the sight  
Of me as of a common enemy,  
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,  
I know not : Lords are lordliest in their wine ;  
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd  
With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd ;  
No less the people on their holy days  
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable :  
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
Our God, our law, my nation or myself,  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

CHOR. Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
Great among the heathen round ;  
Send thee the angel of thy birth to stand,  
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field  
Rode up in flames after his message told  
Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
Of fire ; that spirit that first rush'd on thee  
In the camp of Dan  
Be efficacious in thee now at need.

For never was from heaven imparted  
 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,  
 As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.  
 But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste  
 With youthful steps? much livelier than ere while  
 He seems: Supposing here to find his son,  
 Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

MAN. Peace with you, brethren; my inducement hi-  
 Was not at present here to find my son, [ther  
 By order of the lords new-parted hence  
 To come and play before them at their feast.  
 I heard all as I came, the city rings,  
 And numbers thither flock, I had no will,  
 Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly:  
 But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly  
 To give you part with me what hope I have  
 With good success to work his liberty.

CHOR. That hope would much rejoice us to partake  
 With thee; say, reverend sire, we thirst to hear.

MAN. I have attempted one by one the lords  
 Either at home, or through the high-street passing,  
 With supplication prone and father's tears,  
 'T' accept of ransom for my son their pris'ner.  
 Some much av'rie I found and wondrous harsh,  
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;  
 That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests:  
 Others more moderate seeming, but their aim  
 Private reward, for which both God and state  
 They easily would set to sale; a third  
 More generous far and civil, who confess'd  
 They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd  
 Their foe to misery beneath their fears,



The rest was magnanimity to remit,  
If some convenient ransom was propos'd.  
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

CHOR. Doubtless the people shouting to behold  
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,  
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

MAN. His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And number'd down : Much rather I shall chuse  
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,  
And he in that calamitous prison left.  
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him ;  
For his redemption all my patrimony,  
If need be, I am ready to forego  
And quit : Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

CHOR. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,  
Thou for thy son are bent to lay out all ;  
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,  
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,  
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

MAN. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,  
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled  
With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,  
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,  
That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd :  
And I persuade me God had not permitted  
His strength again to grow up with his hair  
Garrison'd round about him like a camp  
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose  
To use him farther yet in some great service,  
Not to sit idle with so great a gift  
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.

And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,  
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

CHOR. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon [vain  
Conceiv'd, agreeable to a father's love,  
In both which we, as next, participate. [noise!

MAN. I know your friendly minds and—O what  
Mercy of heav'n, what hideous noise was that!  
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

CHOR. Noise call you it, or universal groan,  
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,  
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MAN. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.  
Oh it continues, they have slain my son.

CHOR. Thy son is rather slaying them, that out-cry  
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

MAN. Some dismal accident it needs must be;  
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

CHOR. Best keep together here, lest running thither  
We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the Philistines is fall'n;  
From whom could else a general cry be heard?  
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,  
From other hands we need not much to fear.  
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God  
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,  
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

MAN. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

CHOR. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible  
For his people of old; what hinders now?

MAN. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;  
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.  
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

CHOR. Of good or bad, so great, of bad the sooner;  
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.  
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,  
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

MESS. O whither shall I run, or which way fly.  
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?  
For dire imagination still pursues me.  
But providence or instinct of nature seems,  
Or reason, though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,  
To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
To thee first reverend Manoa, and to these  
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,  
As at some distance from the place of horror,  
So in the sad event too much concern'd. [thoe-

MAN. The accident was loud, and here before  
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;  
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

MESS. It would burst forth, but I recover breath  
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

MAN. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

MESS. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,  
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n. [saddest

MAN. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not  
The desolation of a hostile city. [surfeit.

MESS. Feed on that first, there may in grief be

MAN. Relate by whom.

MESS. By Samson.

MAN. That still lessens

The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

MESS. Ah Manoa, I refrain, too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too soon,  
Left evil tidings with too rude irruption  
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

MAN. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

MESS. Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

MAN. The worst indeed; O all my hope's defeated  
To free him hence! but death who sets all free  
Hath paid his ranfome now and full discharge.  
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd  
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves  
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring  
Nipp'd with the lagging-rear of winter's frost.  
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,  
How dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.  
All by him fell, thou say'st, by whom fell he?  
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

MESS. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MAN. Wearied with slaughter then, or how? ex-

MESS. By his own hands. [plain.

MAN. Self-violence? what cause  
Brought him so soon at variance with himself  
Among his foes?

MESS. Inevitable cause  
At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;  
The edifice where all were met to see him,  
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

MAN. O lastly over-strong against thyself!  
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.  
More than enough we know; but while things yet  
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,

Eye-witness of what first or last was done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

ME ss. Occasions drew me early to this city,  
And as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,  
The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd  
Through each high street: Little I had dispatch'd,  
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day  
Samson should be brought forth, to shew the people  
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.  
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.

The building was a spacious theatre  
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,  
With seats where all the lords and each degree  
Of fort, might sit in order to behold;  
The other side was open, where the throng  
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;  
I among those aloof obscurely stood.

The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice [wine,  
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and  
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately

Was Samson as a public servant brought,  
In their state-livery clad; before him pipes  
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,  
Both horse and foot, before him and behind,  
Archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.

At sight of him the people with a shout  
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,  
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.  
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,  
Came to the place, and what was set before him  
Which without help of eye might be assay'd



To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd  
All with incredible, stupenduous force,  
None daring to appear antagonist.  
At length, for intermission sake, they led him  
Between the pillars; he his guide requested  
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)  
As over-tir'd, to let him lean a while  
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,  
That to the arched roof gave main support.  
He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson  
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,  
And eyes fast fix'd, he stood as one who pray'd,  
Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd:  
At last with head erect thus cry'd aloud,  
Hitherto, lords, what your commands impos'd.  
I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,  
Not without wonder or delight beheld:  
Now of my own accord such other trial  
I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater,  
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.  
This utter'd, straining all his nerves, he bow'd,  
As with the force of winds and water pents,  
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars  
With horrible convulsion to and fro,  
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew  
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder  
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
Of this, but each Philistian city round,  
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.  
Samson with these inmix'd, inevitably,

Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;  
The vulgar only 'scap'd who stood without.

CHOR. O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!  
Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd  
The work for which thou wast foretold  
To Israel, and now ly'st victorious  
Among thy slain self-kill'd  
Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold  
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd  
Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more  
Than all thy life had slain before. [sublime,

SEMICHOR. While their hearts were jocund and  
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,  
And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,  
Chaunting their idol, and preferring  
Before our living Dread who dwells  
In Silo his bright sanctuary :  
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,  
Who hurt their minds,  
And urg'd them on with mad desire  
To call in haste for their destroyer ;  
They only set on sport and play,  
Unweetingly importun'd  
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them,  
So fond are mortal men,  
Fall'n into wrath divine,  
As their own ruin on themselves t' invite,  
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
And with blindness internal struck.

SEMICHOR. But he though blind of sight,  
Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,  
With inward eyes illuminated,

His fiery virtue rous'd  
From under ashes into sudden flame,  
And as an ev'ning dragon came,  
Assailant on the perched roofs,  
And nests in order rang'd  
Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle,  
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.  
So virtue giv'n for lost,  
Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,  
Like that self-begott'n bird  
In th' Arabian woods embost,  
That no second knows nor third,  
And lay ere while a holocaust,  
From out her ashy womb now teem'd,  
Revives, reflowerishes, then vigorous most  
When most unactive deem'd,  
And though her body die, her fame survives,  
A secular bird ages of lives.

MAN. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,  
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself  
Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd  
A life heroic, on his enemies  
Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,  
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor  
Through all Philistian bounds: To Israel  
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them  
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;  
To himself and father's house eternal fame;  
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this  
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,  
But favouring and assisting to the end.  
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail

Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
Let us go find the body where it lies  
Sok'd in his enemies blood, and from the stream  
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off  
The clotted gore. I with what speed the while  
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)  
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,  
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend  
With silent obsequy and funeral train  
Home to his father's house: There will I build him  
A monument, and planted round with shade  
Of laurel ever-green, and branching palm,  
With all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd  
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour, and adventures high:  
The virgins also shall on feastful days  
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHOR. All is best, though we oft doubt  
What th' unsearchable dispose  
Of highest wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close.  
Oft he seems to hide his face,  
But unexpectedly returns,  
And to his faithful champion hath in place  
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns

And all that band them to resist  
His uncontrollable intent;  
His servant he with new acquit  
Of true experience from this great event  
With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,  
And calm of mind all passion spent.

T H E E N D.



C O M U S,

A

M A S K.

P R E S E N T E D

AT LUDLOW-CASTLE, M,DC,XXXIV.

B E F O R E

The EARL of Bridgewater, then President  
of WALES.

C O M M U N I T Y

M A S S A C H U S E T T S



The Earl of Sandwich, President  
of the Massachusetts Historical Society

# THE PERSONS

The attendant spirit, afterwards in the habit of  
Thyella.

COMUS with his crew.

The Lady, her attendants, and her train.

BROTHER.

BROTHER.

SARINA the nymph.

The chief persons who pretend, were

The Lady, her attendants, and her train.

The Lady, her attendants, and her train.

MR THOMAS LIGGTON his brother.

The Lady ALICE LIGGTON.

## The PERSONS.

The attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of  
Thyrsis.

COMUS with his crew.

The LADY.

1 BROTHER.

2 BROTHER.

SABRINA the nymph.

The chief persons who presented, were,

The Lord BRACKLY.

Mr THOMAS EGERTON his brother.

The Lady ALICE EGERTON.

C O M U S,

A

M A S K.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

*The attendant Spirit descends or enters.*

**B**EFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court  
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes  
Of bright acreal spirits live inspher'd  
In regions mild of calm and serene air,  
Above the smoak and stir of this dim spot,  
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care  
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,  
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,  
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,  
After this mortal change, to her true servants  
Amongst the enthron'd gods on fainted seats.  
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire  
To lay their just hands on that golden key,  
That ope's the palace of eternity :  
To such my errand is; and but for such,  
I would not foil these pure ambrosial weeds  
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway  
Of ev'ry salt flood, and each ebbing stream,



Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,  
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,  
That like to rich and various gemms inlay  
The unadorned bosom of the deep,  
Which he to grace his tributary gods  
By course commits to several government,  
And gives them leave to wear their saphire crowns,  
And wield their little tridents ; but this Isle,  
The greatest and the best of all the main,  
He quarters to his blue-hair'd dieties,  
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun  
A noble peer of mickle trust and power  
Hás in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide  
An old, and haughty nation proud in arms :  
Where his fair offspring nurs'd in princely lore,  
Are coming to attend their father's state,  
And new-entrusted sceptre ; but their way  
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,  
The nodding horror of whose shady brows  
Threats the forlorn and wandring passenger ;  
And here their tender age might suffer peril,  
But that by quick command from sovereign Jove  
I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard ;  
And listen why, for I will tell you now  
What never yet was heard in tale or song,  
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape  
Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,  
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,  
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds list'd,  
On Circe's island fell ; (who knows not Circe  
The daughter of the sun ? whose charmed cup

Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a groveling swine)  
This nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,  
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,  
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son  
Much like his father, but his mother more,  
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd,  
Who ripe, and frolic of his full grown age,  
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,  
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,  
And in thick shelter of black shades imbow'd  
Excels his mother at her mighty art,  
Off'ring to every weary traveller  
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,  
To quench the drouth of Phoebus, which as they taste  
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)  
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,  
Th' exprefs resemblance of the gods, is chang'd  
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,  
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,  
All other parts remaining as they were ;  
And they, so perfect is their misery,  
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,  
But boast themselves more comely than before,  
And all their friends and native home forget,  
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.  
Therefore when any favour'd of high Jove  
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,  
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star  
I shoot from heav'n, to give him safe convoy,  
As now I do : But first I must put off  
These my sky robes spun out of Iris wooff,

And take the weeds and likeness of a swain  
 That to the service of this house belongs,  
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,  
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,  
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,  
 And in this office of his mountain watch,  
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid  
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread  
 Of hateful steps. I must be viewless now.

*Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass  
 in the other ; with him a rout of monsters, beaded like  
 sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and  
 women, their apparel glistering ; they come in making  
 a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

COMUS. The star that bids the shepherd fold,  
 Now the top of heav'n doth hold,  
 And the gilded ear of day  
 His glowing axle doth allay  
 In the steep Atlantic stream,  
 And the slope sun his upward beam  
 Shoots against the dusky pole,  
 Pacing toward the other goal  
 Of his chamber in the east.  
 Mean while welcome joy, and feast,  
 Midnight shout, and revelry,  
 Tipsy dance, and jollity.  
 Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
 Rigour now is gone to bed,  
 And Advice with scrupulous head ;

Strict Age, and four Severity,  
With their grave saws in slumber lie.  
We that are of purer fire  
Imitate the starry quire,  
Who in their nightly watchful spheres,  
Lead in swift round the months and years.  
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,  
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;  
And on the tawny sands and shelves,  
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.  
By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,  
The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim,  
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :  
What hath night to do with sleep ?  
Night hath better sweets to prove,  
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.  
Come let us our rites begin,  
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,  
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.  
Hail Goddess of nocturnal sport,  
Dark vail'd Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame  
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,  
That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb  
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,  
And makes one blot of all the air,  
Stay thy cloudy ebony chair,  
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend  
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end  
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,  
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,  
The nice morn on th' Indian steep  
From her cabin'd loophole peep,

And to the tell-tale sun descry  
 Our conceal'd solemnity.  
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground  
 In a light fantastic round.

*The Measure.*

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace  
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.  
 Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees ;  
 Our number may affright : Some virgin sure  
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)  
 Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,  
 And to my wily trains ; I shall ere long  
 Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd  
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl  
 My dazling spells into the spungy air,  
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,  
 And give it false presentments, lest the place  
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,  
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight,  
 Which must not be, for that's against my course ;  
 I under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
 And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy,  
 Baited with reasons not unplaufible,  
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye  
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,  
 I shall appear some harmless villager,  
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.  
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside  
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.



*The Lady enters.*

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
My best guide now; methought it was the sound  
Of riot, and ill manag'd merriment,  
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe  
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,  
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,  
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,  
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth  
To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence  
Of such late wassailers; yet O where else  
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet  
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?  
My brothers when they saw me wearied out  
With this long way, resolving here to lodge  
Under the spreading favour of these pines,  
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side  
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit  
As the kind hospitable woods provide.  
They left me then, when the gray-hooded ev'n  
Like a sad votarist in palmers weed,  
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus' wain.  
But where they are, and why they came not back,  
Is now the labour of my thoughts, 'tis likeliest  
They had engag'd their wandring steps too far,  
And envious darkness, ere they could return,  
Had stole them from me; else, O thievish Night,  
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,  
That nature hung in heav'n, and fill'd their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misted and lonely traveller?

This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence ev'n now the tumult of loud mirth  
Was rise, and perfect in my list'ning ear,  
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.  
What might this be? a thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory  
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names  
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.  
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound  
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
By a strong siding champion, conscience.—  
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,  
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,  
And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity;  
I see ye visibly, and now believe  
That he, the Supreme Good, t' whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glist'ring guardian if need were  
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.  
Was I deceiv'd, or did a fable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
I did not err, there does a fable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.  
I cannot hallow to my brothers, but  
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest  
I'll venture, for my new enliv'ned spirits  
Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

## S O N G.

*SWEET Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen*

*Within thy airy shell,*

*By slow Meander's margent green,*

*And in the violet-embroider'd vale,*

*Where the love lorn nightingale*

*Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well ;*

*Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair*

*That likest thy Narcissus are ?*

*O if thou have*

*Hid them in some flow'ry cave,*

*Tell me but where,*

*Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere,*

*So may'st thou be translated to the skies,*

*And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.*

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould  
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?  
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
To testify his hidden residence :  
How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,  
At ev'ry fall smoothing the raven down  
Of darkness till it smil'd ! I have oft heard  
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,  
Amidst the flowry-kirtl'd Naiades,  
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,  
Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,  
And lap it in Elysium ; Seylla wept,  
And chid her barking waves into attention,  
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause :

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Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,  
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;  
 But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,  
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss  
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,  
 And she shall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder,  
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,  
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine  
 Dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan, by blest song  
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog  
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

L.A. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise  
 That is addrest to unattending ears;  
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift  
 How to regain my sever'd company,  
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo  
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Co. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

L.A. dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Co. Could that divide you from near ushering guides?

L.A. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Co. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

L.A. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.

Co. And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

L.A. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Co. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

L.A. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Co. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

L.A. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Co. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

L.A. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.

Co. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,  
 And the swink't hedger at his supper fat;  
 I saw them under a green mantling vine  
 That crawls along the side of yon small hill,  
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;  
 Their port was more than human, as they stood:  
 I took it for a fairy vision  
 Of some gay creatures of the element,  
 That in the colours of the rainbow live,  
 And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,  
 And as I pass'd, I worship'd; if those you seek,  
 It were a journey like the path to heav'n,  
 To help you find them.

L.A. Gentle villager,  
 What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Co. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

L.A. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,  
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,  
 Would over-task the best land-pilot's art,  
 Without the sure guess of well practis'd feet.

Co. I know each lane, and every alley green,  
 Dingle, or bushy den of this wild wood,  
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,  
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;  
 And if your stray-attendance be yet lodg'd,  
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know  
 Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark  
 From her thatch'd pallat rowse; if otherwise  
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low  
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe  
 Till further quest.

L.A. Shepherd, I take thy word,



And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,  
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds  
 With smoaky rafters, than in tap'stry halls  
 And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,  
 And yet is most pretended: In a place  
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,  
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.  
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial  
 To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on.

*The two Brothers.*

ELD. BRO. Unmuffle ye faint stars, and thou fair  
 That won't to love the travellers benizon, [moon,  
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,  
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here  
 In double night of darkness and of shades;  
 Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up  
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,  
 Though a rush candle from the wicker hole  
 Of some clay habitation, visit us  
 With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light,  
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,  
 Or Tyrian Cynosure.

2 BRO. Or if our eyes  
 Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear  
 The folded flocks penn'd in their watled cotes,  
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,  
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village-cock  
 Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,  
 'Twould be some solace yet, some little chearing  
 In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.

But O that hapless virgin, our lost sister !  
 Where may she wander now, whither betake her  
 From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles ?  
 Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,  
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm  
 Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.  
 What if in wild amazement, and affright,  
 Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp  
 Of savage hunger, or of savage heat ?

ELD. BRO. Peace, brother, be not over-exquisite  
 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils ?

For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,  
 What need a man forestall his date of grief,  
 And run to meet what he would most avoid ?  
 Or if they be but false alarms of fear,  
 How bitter is such self-delusion ?

I do not think my sister so to seek,  
 Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,  
 And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,  
 As that the single want of light and noise  
 (Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)  
 Could still the constant mood of her calm thoughts,  
 And put them into this mis-becoming plight.

Virtue could see to do what virtue would  
 By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
 Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self  
 Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,  
 Where with her best nurse contemplation  
 She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,  
 That in the various bustle of resort  
 Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.  
 He that has light within his own clear breast

May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day;  
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun ;  
Himself is his own dungeon.

2. BRO. 'Tis most true,  
That musing meditation most affects  
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,  
Far from the chearful haunt of men and herds,  
And sits as safe as in a senate-house ;  
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,  
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,  
Or do his gray hairs any violence?  
But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree  
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye,  
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit  
From the rash hand of bold incontinence.  
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps  
Of misers treasure by an outlaw's den,  
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope  
Danger will wink on opportunity,  
And let a single helpless maiden pass  
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.  
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not,  
I fear the dread events that dog them both,  
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person  
Of our unowned sister.

ELD. BRO. I do not, brother,  
Infer, as if I thought my sister's state  
Secure without all doubt, or controversy :  
Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear  
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is

That I incline to hope, rather than fear,  
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.  
 My sister is not so defenceless left  
 As you imagine, she has a hidden strength  
 Which you remember not.

2. BRO. What hidden strength,  
 Unless the strength of heav'n, if you mean that?

ELD. BRO. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,  
 Which if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:

'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:

She that has that, is clad in complete steel,

And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen

May trace huge forests and unharbour'd heaths,

Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,

Where through the sacred rays of chastity,

No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer

Will dare to foil her virgin purity:

Yea there, where very desolation dwells

By grotts, and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,

She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,

Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,

In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,

Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,

That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,

No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,

Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.

Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call

Antiquity from the old schools of Greece

To testify the arms of chastity?

Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,

Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,

Wherewith the tam'd she brinded kineſs,  
And spotted mountain pard, but ſet at nought  
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men  
Fear'd her ſtern frown, and ſhe was queen o'th' woods.  
What was the ſnaky-headed Gorgon ſhield  
That wiſe Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,  
Wherewith ſhe freez'd her foes to congeal'd ſtone,  
But rigid looks of chaſte aſterity,  
And noble grace that daſh'd brute violence  
With ſudden adoration and blank awe?  
So dear to heav'n is faintly chaſtity,  
That when a ſoul is found ſincerely ſo,  
A thouſand liveried angels lacky her,  
Driving far off each thing of ſin and guilt,  
And in clear dream, and ſolemn viſion,  
Tell her of things that no groſs ear can hear,  
Till oft converſe with heav'nly habitants  
Begin to caſt a beam on th' outward ſhape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turns it by degrees to the ſoul's eſſence,  
Till all be made immortal: But when luſt,  
By unchaſte looks, looſe geſtures, and foul talk,  
But moſt by lewd and lavish act of ſin,  
Lets in deſilement to the inward parts,  
The ſoul grows clotted by contagion,  
Imbodies, and imbrates, till ſhe quite loſe  
The divine property of her firſt being.  
Such are thoſe thick and gloomy ſhadows damp  
Oft ſeen in charnal vaults, and ſepulchres,  
Ling'ring and ſitting by a new-made grave,  
As loth to leave the body that it lov'd,  
And link'd itſelf by carnal ſenſuality



To a degenerate and degraded state.

2 BRO. How charming is divine philosophy!  
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

ELD. BRO. Lift, lift, I hear  
Some far off hallow break the silent air.

2 BRO. Me thought so too; what should it be?

ELD. BRO. For certain  
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,  
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,  
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

2 BRO. Heav'n keep my sister! Again, again, and  
Best draw, and stand upon our guard. [near;

ELD. BRO. I'll hallow;  
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,  
Defence is a good cause, and heav'n be for us.

*The attendant Spirit, habited like a shepherd.*

That hallow I should know, what are you? speak.  
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else. [again.

SPIR. What voice is that, my young lord? speak

2 BRO. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

ELD. BRO. Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft  
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, [delay'd  
And sweetn'd every muskrose of the dale.

How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram  
Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,  
Or straggling weather the penn'd flock forfook?  
How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

SPI. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,  
 I came not here on such a trivial toy  
 As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth  
 Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth  
 That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought  
 To this my errand, and the care it brought.  
 But, O my virgin lady, where is she?  
 How chance she is not in your company?

ELD. BRO. To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame  
 Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

SPIR. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

ELD. BRO. What fears, good Thyrsis? prithee briefly.

SPIR. I'll tell ye, 'tis not vain or fabulous, [shew.  
 (Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)  
 What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly muse,  
 Story'd of old in high immortal verse,  
 Of dire chimera's and enchanted isles,  
 And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell;  
 For such there be, but unbelief is blind.  
 Within the navel of this hideous wood,  
 Immur'd in Cypress shades a forcerer dwells,  
 Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,  
 Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;  
 And here to every thirsty wanderer,  
 By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,  
 With many murmers mix'd, whose pleasing poison  
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,  
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast  
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage  
 Character'd in the face; this have I learnt  
 Tending my flocks hard by th' hilly crofts  
 That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night

He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl  
Like stabl'd wolves, or tygers at their prey,  
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate  
In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.  
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,  
To enveigle and invite th' unwary sense  
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.  
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks  
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb  
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,  
I sat me down to watch upon a bank  
With ivy canopied, and interwove  
With flaunting honey-suckle and began,  
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,  
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,  
Till fancy had her fill; but ere a close  
The wonted rore was up amidst the woods,  
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;  
At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,  
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence  
Gave respite to the drowsy flighted steeds,  
That draw the litter of close curtain'd sleep;  
At last a soft and solemn breathing sound  
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,  
And stole upon the air, that even Silence  
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might  
Deny her nature, and be never more  
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,  
And took in strains that might create a soul  
Under the ribs of death: But O ere long  
Too well I did perceive it was the voice  
Of my most honour'd lady, your dear sister.

Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,  
 And O poor hapless nightingale, thought I,  
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!  
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,  
 Through paths and turnings oft'n trode by day,  
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place  
 Where that damn'd wifard hid in fly disguise,  
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met  
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,  
 'The idle's innocent lady his with'd prey,  
 Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,  
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.  
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd  
 Ye were the two she meant, with that I sprung  
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,  
 But further I know not.

2 BRO. O night and shades,  
 How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot  
 Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin  
 Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence  
 You gave me, brother?

ELD. BRO. Yes, and keep it still,  
 Lean on it safely; not a period  
 Shall be unsaid for me: Against the threats  
 Of malice or of forcery, or that pow'r  
 Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,  
 Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,  
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not intrall'd;  
 Yea even that which mischief meant most harm,  
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory;  
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last

Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to itself,  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed, and self-consum'd ; if this fail,  
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,  
And earth's base built on stubble. But come let's on.  
Against th' opposing will and arm of heav'n  
May never this just sword be lifted up,  
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt  
With all the grisly legions that troop  
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,  
Harpyes and Hydra's, or all the monstrous forms  
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,  
And force him to restore his purchase back,  
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,  
Curs'd as his life.

SPIR. Alas ! good vent'rous youth,  
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise ;  
But here thy sword can do thee little stead ;  
Far other arms and other weapons must  
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms :  
He with his bare wand can unthred thy joints,  
And crumble all thy sinews.

ELD. BRO. Why prithee, shepherd,  
How durst thou then thyself approach so near,  
As to make this relation ?

SPIR. Care and utmost shifts  
How to secure the lady from surprisal,  
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,  
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd  
In every virtuous plant and healing herb  
That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray :  
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,



Which when I did, he on the tender grass  
Would sit, and hearken even to extasy,  
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,  
And shew me simples of a thousand names,  
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties :  
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,  
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out ;  
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
But in another country, as he said,  
Bore a bright golden flow'r, but not in this soil :  
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain  
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon ;  
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly  
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave ;  
He call'd it Haemony, and gave it me,  
And bad me keep it as of sov'reign use  
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,  
Or gastly furies apparition :  
I purs'd it up, but little reck'ning made,  
Till now that this extremity compell'd :  
But now I find it true ; for by this means  
I knew the foul inchanter though disguis'd,  
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,  
And yet came off : If you have this about you,  
(As I will give you when we go) you may  
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall ;  
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,  
And brandish'd blade rush on him, break his glass,  
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,  
But seize his wand ; though he and his curst crew  
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,  
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,

Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

ELD. BRO. Thyrsis, lead on a pace, I'll follow thee,  
And some good angel bear a shield before us.

*The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness : Soft music, tables spread with all dainties. Comus appears with his rabble, and the lady set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

COMUS. Nay, lady, sit ; if I but wave this wand,  
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,  
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,  
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

LA. Fool, do not boast,  
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind  
With all thy charms, although this corporeal rind  
Thou hast immanac'd, while heav'n fees good.

CO. Why are you vex'd, lady ? Why do you frown ?  
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger, from these gates  
Sorrow flies far : See here be all the pleasures  
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,  
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns  
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.  
And first behold this cordial julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds  
With sp'rits of balm, and fragrant syrups mix'd.  
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone  
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,  
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.  
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,

And to those dainty limbs which nature lent  
 For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?  
 But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,  
 And harshly deal like an ill borrower  
 With that which you receiv'd on other terms,  
 Scorning the unexempt condition  
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,  
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,  
 That have been tir'd all day without repast,  
 And timely rest have wanted; but, fair virgin,  
 This will restore all soon.

L.A. 'Twill not, false traitor,  
 'Twill not restore the truth and honesty  
 That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.  
 Was this the cottage, and the safe abode  
 Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,  
 These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!  
 Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver;  
 Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence  
 With visor'd falshood, and base forgery?  
 And would'st thou seek again to trap me here  
 With liqourish baits fit to insnare a brute?  
 Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,  
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none  
 But such as are good men can give good things,  
 And that which is not good, is not delicious  
 To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Co. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears  
 To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,  
 And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,  
 Praising the lean and fallow abstinence.  
 Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth,

With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,  
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,  
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,  
But all to please and sate the curious taste ?  
And set to work millions of spinning worms,  
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk  
To deck her sons, and that no corner might  
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins  
She hutch'd th' all-worshipp'd ore, and precious gems,  
To store her children with ; if all the world  
Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on pulse,  
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but freize,  
Th' all-giver would be unthank'd, would be unprais'd,  
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,  
And we should serve him as a grudging master,  
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,  
And live like nature's bastards, not her sons,  
Who would be quite furcharg'd with her own weight,  
And strangl'd with her waste fertility ;  
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark'd with  
The herds would over-multitude their lords, [plumes,  
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unsought  
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep, [diamonds  
And so bestud with stars, that they below  
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last  
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.  
Lift lady, be not coy, and be not cosen'd  
With that same vaunted name virginity.  
Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,  
But must be current, and the good thereof  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unfav'ry in th' enjoyment of itself ;

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose  
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.  
Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown  
In courts, in feasts, and high solemnities,  
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;  
It is for homely features to keep home,  
They had their name hence; coarse complexions  
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply  
The sampler, and to tease the housewife's wool.  
What need a vermil-tinctur'd lip for that,  
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?  
There was another meaning in these gifts,  
Think what, and be advis'd, you are but young yet.

L.A. I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips  
In this unhallow'd air, but that this jugler,  
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,  
Obtruding false rules, pranck'd in reason's garb.  
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,  
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.  
Impostor, do not charge most innocent nature,  
As if she would her children should be riotous  
With her abundance; she, good caterers,  
Means her provision only to the good,  
That live according to her sober laws,  
And holy dictate of spare temperance:  
If every just man, that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and befitting share  
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury  
Now heaps upon some ew with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd,  
In unsuperfluous even proportion,  
And she no whit encumber'd with her store,



And then the giver would be better thank'd,  
 His praise due paid; for swinish gluttony  
 Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,  
 But with besotted base ingratitude  
 Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?  
 Or have I said enough? To him that dares  
 Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words  
 Against the sun-clad power of chastity,  
 Fain would I something say, yet to what end?  
 Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend  
 The sublime notion, and high mystery,  
 That must be utter'd to unfold the sage  
 And serious doctrine of virginity,  
 And thou art worthy that thou should'st not know  
 More happiness than this thy present lot.  
 Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,  
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,  
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd;  
 Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth  
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits  
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence,  
 That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,  
 And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and shake,  
 Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,  
 Werè shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

Co. She fables not, I feel that I do fear  
 Her words set off by some superior power;  
 And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew  
 Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove  
 Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus  
 To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble  
 And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,

This is mere moral babble, and direct  
 Against the canon laws of our foundation ;  
 I must not suffer this ; yet 'tis but the lees  
 And settlings of a melancholy blood :  
 But this will cure all strait, one sip of this  
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight  
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise and taste.—

*The brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest his  
 glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground ;  
 his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven  
 in ; the attendant Spirit comes in.*

SPIR. What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape ?  
 O ye mistook, ye should have snatch'd his wand  
 And bound him fast ; without his rod revers'd,  
 And backward mutters of dislevering power,  
 We cannot free the lady that sits here  
 In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless :  
 Yet stay, be not disturb'd, now I bethink me,  
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,  
 Which once of Meliboeus old I learn'd,  
 'The soothest shepherd that ere pip'd on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,  
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,  
 Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure ;  
 Whilom she was the daughter of Lochrine,  
 That had the scepter from his father Brute.  
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit  
 Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,  
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood  
 That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.  
 The water nymphs that in the bottom play'd,

Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,  
 Bearing her strait to aged Nereus hall,  
 Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,  
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe  
 In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodil,  
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense  
 Drop'd in ambrosial oils till she reviv'd,  
 And underwent a quick immortal change,  
 Made goddess of the river; still she retains  
 Her maid'n gentleness, and oft at eve  
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,  
 Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck-signs  
 That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,  
 Which she with precious viol'd liquors heals.  
 For which the shepherds at their festivals  
 Carrol her goodness loud in rustic lays,  
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream  
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffadils.  
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock  
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,  
 If she be right invok'd in warbled song,  
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift  
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,  
 In hard-besetting need; this will I try,  
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

## S O N G.

*Sabrina fair,*

*Listen where thou art sitting*

*Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,*

*In twisted braids of lillies knitting*

*The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;  
Listen for dear honour's sake,  
Goddeſs of the ſilver lake,  
Listen and ſave.*

Listen and appear to us  
In name of great Oceanus,  
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,  
And Tethys' grave majestic pace,  
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,  
And the Carpathian wiſard's hook,  
By ſcaly Triton's winding ſhell,  
And old ſooth-ſaying Glaucus' ſpell,  
By Leucothea's lovely hands,  
And her ſon that rules the ſtrands,  
By Thetis tinſel-flipper'd feet,  
And the ſongs of Sirens ſweet,  
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,  
And fair Ligea's golden comb,  
Wherewith ſhe ſits on diamond rocks,  
Sleeking her ſoft alluring locks,  
By all the nymphs that nightly dance  
Upon thy ſtreams with wily glance,  
Riſe, riſe, and heave thy roſy head  
From thy coral-paven bed,  
And bridle in thy headlong-wave,  
Till thou our ſummons answer'd have.  
Listen and ſave.

*Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rusby-fringed bank,  
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,  
My sliding chariot stays,  
Thick set with agat, and the azurn sheen  
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,  
That in the channel strays ;  
Whilst from off the waters fleet  
Thus I set my printless feet  
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,  
That bends not as I tread ;  
Gentle swain, at thy request  
I am here.

SPR. Goddess dear,  
We implore thy powerful hand  
To undo the charmed band  
Of true virgin here distressed,  
Through the force, and through the wile  
Of unblest inchanter vile.

SAB. Shepherd, 'tis my office best  
To help insnared chastity :  
Brightest lady look on me,  
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast  
Drops that from my fountain pure,  
I have kept of precious cure,  
Thrice upon thy fingers tip,  
Thrice upon thy rubied lip,  
Next this marble venom'd seat  
Smear'd with gums of glutenous heat,  
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold :



Now the spell hath lost his hold ;  
And I must haste ere morning hour  
To wait in Amphitrite's bow'r.

*Sabrina descends, and the Lady rises out of her seat.*

SPIR. Virgin daughter of Loocrine,  
Sprung of old Anchises line,  
May thy brimmed waves for this  
Their full tribute never miss  
From a thousand petty rills,  
That tumble down the snowy hills :  
Summer drouth, or singed air  
Never scorch thy tresses fair,  
Nor wet October's torrent flood  
Thy molten crystal fill with mud ;  
May thy billows roll ashore  
The beryl, and the golden ore,  
May thy lofty head be crown'd  
With many a tower and terrafs round,  
And here and there thy banks upon  
With groves of myrrh, and cinnamon.

Come, lady, while heav'n lends us grace,  
Let us flie this cursed place,  
Lest the forcerer us entice  
With some other new device.  
Not a waste, or needles found,  
Till we come to holier ground ;  
I shall be your faithful guide  
Through this gloomy covert wide,  
And not many furlongs thence  
Is your father's residence,

Where this night are met in state  
 Many a friend to gratulate  
 His wish'd presence, and beside  
 All the swains that near abide,  
 With jigs, and rural dance resort;  
 We shall catch them at their sport,  
 And our sudden coming there  
 Will double all their mirth and cheer;  
 Come let us haste, the stars grow high,  
 But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

*The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town, and the President's castle; then come in country-dancers, after them the attendant Spirit, with the two Brothers and the Lady.*

## S O N G.

SPIR. Back, shepherds, back, enough your play,  
 Till next sun-shine holiday;  
 Here be without duck or nod  
 Other trappings to be trod  
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise  
 As Mercury did first devise  
 With the mincing Dryades  
 On the lawns, and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,  
 I have brought ye new delight,  
 Here behold so goodly grown  
 Three fair branches of your own;

Heav'n bath timely try'd their youth,  
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,  
 And sent them here through hard assays  
 With a crown of deathless praise,  
 To triumph in victorious dance  
 O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.

*The dances ended, the Spirit epiloguizes.*

SPIR. To the ocean now I fly,  
 And those happy climes that ly  
 Where day never shuts his eye,  
 Up in the broad fields of the sky :  
 There I suck the liquid air  
 All amidst the gardens fair  
 Of Hesperus, and his daughters three  
 That sing about the golden tree :  
 Along the crisped shades and bowers  
 Revels the spruce and jocund spring,  
 The Graces, and the rolie-bosom'd Hours,  
 Thither all their bounties bring ;  
 That there eternal summer dwells,  
 And west winds, with musky wing  
 About the cedarn alleys sing :  
 Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.  
 Iris there with humid bow,  
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow  
 Flowers of more mingled hue  
 Than her purpled scarf can shew,  
 And drenches with Elysian dew  
 (List mortals, if your ears be true)

Beds of Hyacinth, and roses,  
Where young Adonis oft reposes,  
Waxing well of his deep wound  
In slumber soft, and on the ground  
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen ;  
But far above in spangled sheen  
Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc'd,  
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc'd,  
After her wandring labours long,  
Till free consent the gods among  
Make her his eternal bride,  
And from her fair unspotted side  
Two blissful twins are to be born,  
Youth and Joy ; so Jove hath sworn,

But now my task is smoothly done,  
I can fly, or I can run  
Quickly to the green earth's end,  
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,  
And from thence can soar as soon  
To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love virtue, she alone is free,  
She can teach you how to clime  
Higher than the sphery chime ;  
Or if virtue feeble were,  
Heav'n itself would stoop to her,

T H E E N D.

beds of hyacinths, and roses,  
 Where young Aeneas of reposes,  
 Waking well of his sleep wound  
 In slumber lost, and on the ground  
 Sadly sits he, African queen;  
 But far above in spangled stream  
 Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advances,  
 Holds his dear Psyche's sweet incand,  
 After her wandering labours long,  
 Till free consent the gods among  
 Make her his eternal bride,  
 And from her fair unspotted side  
 Two blissful twins are to be born,  
 Youth and Joy; O love hath sworn,  
 But now my task is smoothly done,

I can fly, or I can run,  
 Quickly to the green earth's end,  
 Where the bow'd welkin flows down hand,  
 And from thence can soar as soon  
 To the corners of the moon.

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Metals that would now  
 Love virtue, the stone is true,  
 And can teach you how to climb  
 Higher than the sperry chime;  
 Or if virtue feeble were,  
 Heavy a itself would stoop to her.



